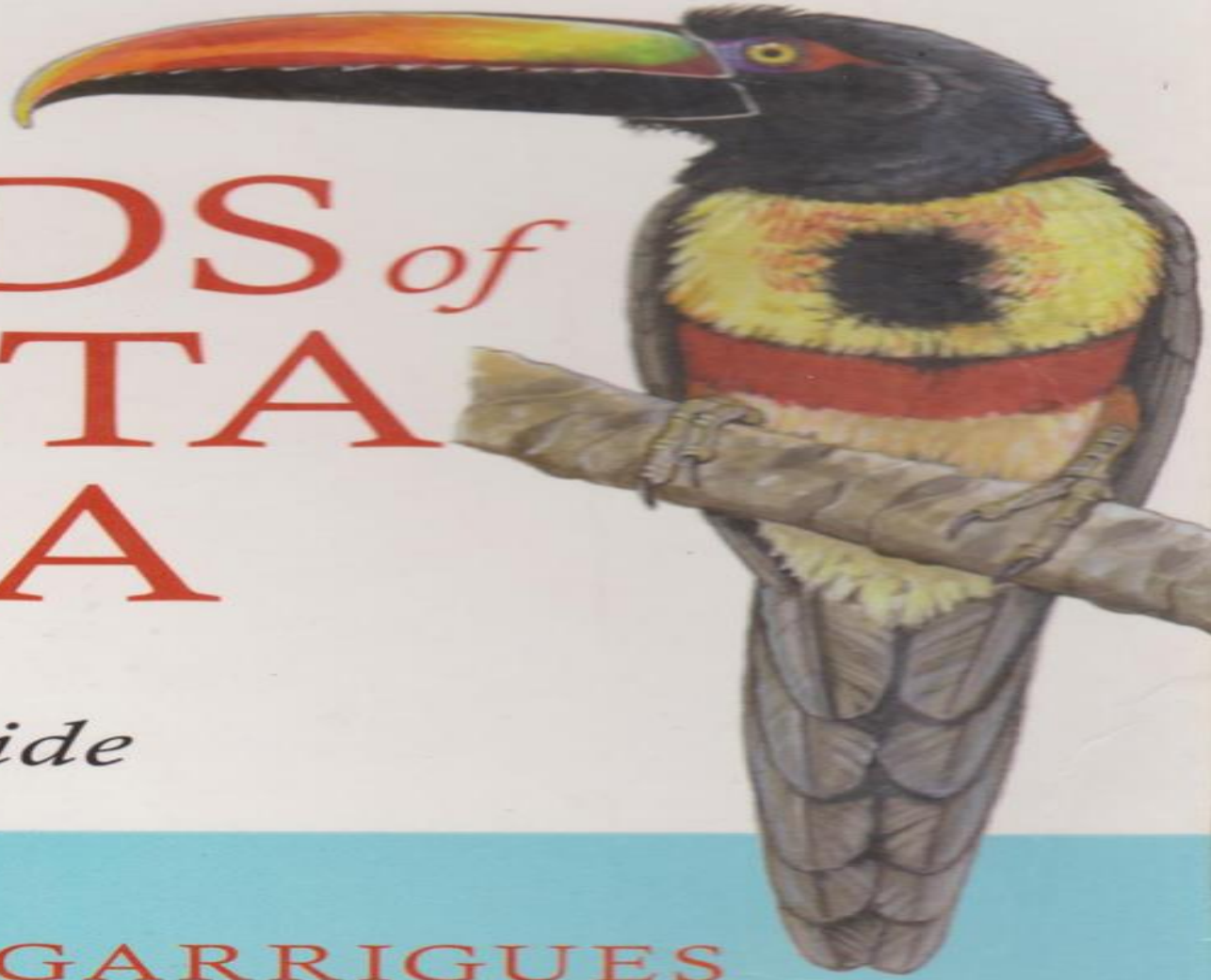
SECOND EDITION

The BIRDS of COSTA RICA

A Field Guide



RICHARD GARRIGUES
and ROBERT DEAN

A ZONA TROPICAL PUBLICATION

Adult Vultures and Raptors in Flight

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Swallow-tailed Kite, p. 98

The Birds of Costa Rica

A FIELD GUIDE

Second Edition

RICHARD GARRIGUES

Illustrated by

ROBERT DEAN

A Zona Tropical Publication

FROM

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Designer: Gabriela Wattson

Richard dedicates this book to the loving memory of Abbie Florence Rice, who gave him his first Peterson's.

Robert dedicates this book to the late Karen Mogensen, who started him on his Costa Rican adventure, and to TD and Layla.

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Preface

The concept for this book evolved from several years of seeing visitors, local birders, and even naturalist guides venturing into the field with just the illustrated plates removed from the center of *A Guide to the Birds of Costa Rica* by F. Gary Stiles and Alexander F. Skutch (Cornell University Press, 1989). Although understandable from the perspective of minimizing gear weight, this practice always seemed a pity, as it meant leaving behind the entire text of that wonderful guide. Since it was clear that people were primarily interested in making correct species identifications while in the field, we set out to provide an alternative for that specific purpose.

In 2007, we published the first edition of this book with the objective of pairing quality illustrations with concise species accounts to facilitate identification in the field. In order to limit the size and weight of the book we sacrificed material that, while interesting, was not directly pertinent to field identification. Our recommendation was—and still is—that serious birders obtain a copy of the Stiles and Skutch volume for more in-depth information on topics such as habits, nesting, voice, and full range.

The response from reviewers and users of the first edition has been overwhelmingly positive. Nonetheless, we felt we could provide a more complete resource by incorporating additional species and making improvements to the text, illustrations, and range maps.

In this second edition, we describe all 903 species definitely known from Costa Rica as of October 2013. Thirty of these are new species that have been added to Costa Rica's country list since the publication of the first edition; for the first time we also include pelagic birds and species regular to Cocos Island. Fifty-six of the species covered are placed in a Rarities section (p. 372), which includes species recorded less than three times, species that have not been reported in more than twenty years, and the more uncommon pelagics.

Artist Robert Dean has supplied over 360 new illustrations for this edition. These fall into three categories: those that replace (and improve upon) illustrations from the first edition, those that supplement the primary illustrations with in-flight views and additional plumages, and those that cover the sixty-four species illustrated for the first time in this edition. The latter group includes the thirty new additions to the country list as well as pelagic species, Cocos Island species, and all rarities recorded from the Costa Rican

mainland. We have also taken great care to further enhance the print quality of the illustrations in order to ensure the highest degree of accuracy and fidelity to the original artwork.

In response to numerous requests, the range maps are now color-coded to reflect migratory status. The maps have been updated and also now indicate vagrant records. Similarly, the species accounts have been adjusted to reflect new information about species' ranges and patterns of occurrence within the country.

One of the most debated changes for the second edition had to do with taxonomy and order of species. To be in accordance with eBird—a powerful and important online data-collection tool—we chose to follow the nomenclature and systematics of the eBird/Clements Checklist of Birds of the World: Version 6.8, which, among other changes, eliminates the *Incertae sedis* status for several genera and moves a number of former finches and seed-eaters into the tanager family. A country checklist that matches this current taxonomic order is included as an appendix (p. 383).

However, at the family level, we have made various deviations from the list order in an effort to assist less-experienced birders. Inspired by an article in the November 2009 issue of *Birding* by Steve N. G. Howell et al. on the issue of taxonomy versus utility in field guides—and further motivated by the recent taxonomic repositioning of falcons after woodpeckers—we have incorporated a sequence that places families of somewhat similar birds next to each other. This means, for example, that swallows and swifts appear consecutively because, despite not being at all closely related, they are similar enough in size and behavior that it is advantageous to have them close together in the guide for easy comparison. Following the same reasoning, we chose to keep falcons next to hawks and eagles.

The order of families in roughly the first third of the book is as follows: game birds, swimming birds, aerial pelagic and coastal species, wading birds and shorebirds, diurnal birds of prey, nocturnal birds, aerial insectivores, and hummingbirds. From there, the families follow more closely the order prescribed by the eBird/Clements list. Along with what we believe is a more user-friendly organizational scheme, we also provide an alphabetical Quick-Find Index of groups on the inside back cover of the book so that users can find the birds they're looking for as quickly as possible.

This is a book by birders for birders, and we sincerely hope that these changes will further enhance your enjoyment and appreciation of Costa Rica's varied and fascinating avifauna.

Acknowledgments

First of all, I would like to thank Phillip Ostenso for having planted the seed that grew to become this book. My deepest thanks also go to my artist colleague, Robert Dean, for having been so ready, willing, and able to do the paintings that grace the pages of this guide; our publishers, John McCuen and Marc Roegiers, for having led us through the entire process so effortlessly, and for having provided thoughtful criticism and suggestions; their editor, Robin Kazmier, who has shown amazing attention to detail and who really deserves most of the credit for making this second edition a reality and such an improvement; and, of course, to Gabriela Wattson at Zona Creativa for having designed a great-looking book.

Current birders in Costa Rica all owe a debt to those ornithologists who have provided us with so much information about the region's birdlife. During the preparation of this book I drew invaluably from the work of (in alphabetical order) Robert S. Ridgely, Alexander F. Skutch, Paul Slud, and F. Gary Stiles. Among my active birding colleagues here I must give special mention to Rafa Campos, Kevin Easley, Julio Sánchez †, and, above all, Jim Zook, for having provided much information and inspiration. Fortunately, in recent years many other people have also been willing to share information about Costa Rican birds, and they include Kenneth Alfaro, Willy Alfaro, Jaime Alvarado, Joel Alvarado, Rodolfo Alvarado, Eduardo Amengual, Hernán Araya, Gilbert Barrantes, Esteban Biamonte, Guillermo Blanco, Luis Campos, Neyer Campos, Ernesto Carman, Jhimmy Castiblanco, Erick Castro, Marino Chacón, Johel Chaves, Leonardo Chaves, Bill Clark, Paul Coopmans, Jorge Corrales, Mariano Cruz, Rolando Delgado, Matt Denton, Gary Diller, Adolfo Downs, Steven Easley, Pablo Elizondo, Jesse Ellis, Johan Fernández, Melvin Fernández, Jeanne Fossani, Bob French, Abraham Gallo, Mark Garland, Geiner Golfin, Charlie Gómez, Gary Gómez, Jean Jacques Gozard, Lou Hegedus, Esteban Herrera, Oscar Herrera, Rich Hoyer, José Alberto Huertas, Carlos Jiménez, Liz Jones, Henry Kantrowitz, Kas Koenraads, Mathias Kümmerlen, Mark Lockwood, Daniel López, Daryl Loth, Bruce Mactavish, Eric Madrigal, Freddy Madrigal, Paco Madrigal, Daniel Martínez, Roy May, Nicole Michel, Michel Montoya, Mike Mulligan, Paul Murgatroyd, Nancy Newfield, Jeff Norris, Patrick O'Donnell, Gerardo Obando, Diego Ocampo, Walter Odio, Winnie Orcutt, Gustavo Orozco, Randall Ortega, Pablo Porras, Noble Proctor, Morris Quesada, Bob Quinn,

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I should also thank all those fellow travelers who have accompanied me in the field during these years for giving me a chance to practice bird identification skills. And I particularly wish to thank Carson Wade for his periodic injections of wit and wisdom throughout the project.

And of course, my wife, Maricia, and my children, Leonardo, Daniel, David, Roberto, and Laura Carolina, were kind enough to put up with my spending long hours at the computer over the years and I truly appreciate their patience and understanding.

Richard Garrigues

First, I wish to thank the multitude of researchers and avid birdwatchers who continue to expand our knowledge of Costa Rican avifauna. Their efforts make an updated, second edition of this work all the more important.

For their camaraderie and assistance in the field I wish to the thank the following people: Bill Adsett, Eduardo Amengual, George Angehr, Nick Athenas, Susan Blank, Juan Carlos Calvachi, Euclides Campos, Ernesto Carmen, Marino Chacón, Judy Davis, Michael Duffy, Kevin Easley, Kathy Erb, Jesse Fagan, David Fisher, Scott Fisher, Michael and Patricia Fogden, Tony Godfrey, Ricardo Guindon, Colonel Steve Guy, Deborah Hamilton de Rosier, Dev Joslin, Johan Kuilder, Olger Licuy, Daryl Loth, Rolando Mata, Victorino Molina Rojas, Pete Morris, Paul Murgatroyd, Patrick O'Donnell, Alison and Michael Olivieri, Bob Proniewych, Steve Pryor, Bitty Ramirez Portilla de Fernandez, Andrew Russell, Candy and Rich Stewart, José Tejada, Daniel Torres, Luis Eduardo Ureña, Alex Villegas, Mark Wainwright, Barry Walker, Roberto Wesson, and Jim Zook.

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I must also thank the Natural History Department at the Museo Nacional de Costa Rica for having graciously provided access to their bird collection, Josep del Hoyo and the *Handbook of the Birds of the World* team for creating such an indispensable reference guide, and Robert Ridgely for his invaluable work on the birds of the Neotropics.

I should also like to thank Kitty Liu at Cornell University Press, our designer at Zona Creativa, Gabriela Wattson, and Marc Roegiers at Zona Tropical Press. My gratitude and appreciation go out to John McCuen and Robin Kazmier at Zona Tropical for their editing skills and, above all, hard work and determination to make this second edition the best it could possibly be.

And last, I am grateful to my co-author, Richard Garrigues, for his encyclopedic knowledge and passion for the birds of this amazing country; without him this guide would not have become a reality in the first place.

Robert Dean

Introduction

The principle objective of this book is to help you correctly identify birds in Costa Rica. The species accounts treat the 903 species known to occur in Costa Rica as of October 2013. These species represent 82 families, and each family is introduced by a brief description that should help the novice birder distinguish members of that family from others. This paragraph generally gives information (about behavior, diet, and salient features) that applies to most or all of the family members found in Costa Rica. Following the family description are the species accounts, which contain the following elements:

Species name. Each species is identified by its English common name and scientific name (in italics), according to the eBird/Clements Checklist of Birds of the World: Version 6.8. Both names appear in the Species Index (p. 411).

Measurements. Each account begins with a measurement of the length of the bird from the tip of the bill to the tip of the tail. Where there is a notable difference in size between the sexes, we give the length of both. The measurements have been rounded off to the nearest whole figure and should only be used as a general indication of size. Judging the size of a bird can be extremely challenging, and it's important to remember that many factors influence the impression of a bird's size—lighting, distance from the observer, and whether or not it is viewed through optical equipment. Similarly, while the length measurements indicate size, they do not account for leg length or a bird's shape and mass—all factors that can definitely affect the impression of size. As an example, both the Streak-chested Antpitta and the Long-billed Gnatwren (pictured below) are listed as measuring 5 in (13 cm); on seeing these birds in life, however, few people would say they are the same size. This is because the antpitta is a long-legged, chunky bird that weighs ten times more than the slender, long-billed, long-tailed gnatwren. Nonetheless, by stating that these are both five-inch birds, you won't be expecting something the size of a turkey.

Two 5-inch birds show that length measurements alone can be a misleading indication of size.

One instance where the given measurements could be very useful, however, would be when two species are near each other, in more or less the same posture, and at the same distance from the observer. A perfect example would be if you had one of the yellowlegs (p. 74) standing within a meter of a Willet (p. 74). Both Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs are quite similar and, if seen alone, can't reliably be told apart by size. However, with the 15-inch Willet close by, one could determine if the yellowlegs was nearly the same size, and thus a Greater Yellowlegs (14 in), or significantly smaller, and therefore a Lesser Yellowlegs (11 in).

Field marks. After the measurements, we describe pertinent field marks that distinguish each species from similar ones. The most significant of these features appear in bold type. Please consult the Anatomical Features section (p. 14) to clarify any body-part terms that may not be familiar to you. For definitions of non-anatomical terms, see the glossary on p. 20.

Abundance. Following the description of unique markings, we include information about how common a species is and where it occurs geographically. Please bear in mind that commonality can vary greatly throughout the mapped range, and is given as an approximate indication of one's likelihood of encountering the species (including by voice only) in the appropriate habitat and time of year (for migrants). Also, the usage of terms varies somewhat from family to family; for example, a "common" raptor will never be as numerous as a "common" warbler. The terms used are the following:

- Abundant: Should be recorded daily and in appreciable numbers.
- Common: Should be recorded almost daily, though not necessarily in large numbers.
- Fairly common: Should be recorded on 50 to 75% of days.
- Uncommon: Recorded on less than 50% of days.
- Rare: Recorded on 10% or less of days.
- Casual: Not expected, but has been known to occur (typically applies to either North American migrants or wanderers from elsewhere in Costa Rica).
- Accidental: Only one or two records (these species are treated separately in the Rarities section [p. 372]).

Migratory status. We identify each bird in terms of its migratory status(es) in Costa Rica. Most species are residents, meaning that they are present year-round. About a quarter of the species that occur in Costa Rica are seasonal migrants from North America, either passage migrants or winter residents. Passage migrants traverse Costa Rica in the fall on their way south, and again in the spring on their return trip north. Winter residents spend the fall and winter in Costa Rica before returning north in the spring. The description of most passage migrant species includes information about when it passes south and in what months it makes its return journey. For winter residents, the range of time cited is circumscribed by the earliest and latest periods of known occurrence, though note that most species will be represented by only a few individuals at either extreme of those dates.

Many species include some individuals that are passage migrants and others that are winter residents. Some passage migrants display behavior that is so similar to that of winter residents that it is difficult to tell them apart, and to thus know the precise time of occurrence in Costa Rica for either kind of migrant. When that is the case, the species is referred to simply as a *migrant*, and the text gives a single range of time that describes when you can expect either passage migrants or winter residents in Costa Rica; at either extreme of the time frame, you can expect a greater proportion of passage migrants, while only winter residents will occur during the middle of the time frame.

Note that a handful of species breed in Costa Rica and then migrate to South America during the second half of the year; these are called *breeding migrants*.

Distribution. A brief statement explains where the species can be found in Costa Rica, generally in terms of the life zones described on p. 7. The elevation ranges stated in the text are not rigid; some species—especially those that feed mostly on flower nectar or fruit—will readily wander up or down slope, beyond their normal elevations, in search of food. Likewise, juvenile birds seeking a territory to claim will sometimes show up in unexpected places, though they will rarely stay long.

One area worth special mention is the Guanacaste Cordillera, where the volcanoes are separated by low passes that do not act as strongly as barriers to the dispersal of Caribbean and Pacific lowland species as do the higher passes in mountain ranges farther to the south. Hence, it is not uncommon to find species that are otherwise confined to the Caribbean slope appearing on the Pacific-facing slopes of the Guanacaste volcanoes, and, to some extent, vice-versa. These distribution quirks may not always be indicated on the range maps or in the text, so be alert to the possibility when you are birding on the slopes of those volcanoes.

As a further aid to understanding where a given species is expected to occur, the map of Costa Rica on p. 12 displays most of the geographic features and place names mentioned in the text.

Range maps. To the left of each account is a thumbnail map of Costa Rica showing the species' range within the country. These maps are rather broad-stroke representations of where each species occurs, but, taken together with the written description of a species' geographic distribution, they indicate if you are at all likely to find the species in a given area. The colors on the range map indicate the species' migratory status in the shaded area as follows:

Purple – resident. The species is known to breed in Costa Rica and is resident throughout the year. Note that, in some cases, the species may not breed in the entire mapped range (e.g., the case of altitudinal migrants).

Red – breeding migrant. The species breeds in Costa Rica, but then migrates out of the country after the breeding season.

Blue – migrant. At least part of the migratory population spends the nonbreeding season in Costa Rica (these are called *winter residents*), even if some portion of the population occurs as passage migrants.

Yellow – passage migrant. The species occurs in Costa Rica en route from breeding grounds to wintering areas, and/or vice-versa. Due to the evolution of distinct migratory routes, not all passage migrant species occur both on the southbound and northbound journeys.

Green – casual. The species is not known to breed in the indicated area (i.e., is a migrant or wanderer from somewhere else) and is generally not expected to occur every year.

Gray – status unknown. Given lack of data, it is impossible at the time to be certain whether the species is a resident or a migrant.

Habitat and behavior. Following the information on status and distribution is a comment on habitat and habits. This will give you an idea of where to expect to find a species within its mapped range, as well as offer an insight into how the bird might behave (e.g. foraging at a certain level of the forest, accompanying mixed species flocks, and attending army-ant raids).

Unfortunately, most species that are found in mature forest (be it dry, humid, wet, or montane) are absent from much of the mapped range due to loss of habitat caused by deforestation. Note that many birds are closely associated with certain plants; when it is pertinent to identifying a bird, we cite the name of the plant or the genus to which it belongs.

Voice. For many species, sound plays an important role in identification. For these, we include a description of the bird's vocalization(s). Although most birds produce a variety of sounds for different purposes, we typically only describe the full song or most common call, due to space limitations. We generally describe the quality of the sound and give a transcription of the call itself in italics.

Transcribing bird sounds is a fairly subjective exercise, and we have employed several techniques to help convey how sounds are delivered. Accent marks indicate syllables that are emphasized, but not noticeably louder than the rest of the call (e.g., *huwít*). Capital letters indicate a stressed syllable that is distinctly louder (e.g., *klerEE*). The absence of punctuation marks or spaces indicates a very fast song (e.g., *bibidididid*). Dashes indicate a slightly slower delivery (e.g., *pee-a-weee*), and commas signal an even more pronounced pause between syllables (e.g., *doy, doy, doy, doy*). And, of course, these various styles can be used together to express more complex vocalizations (e.g., *tlee-dee, teedle-doo*). When a phrase is repeated at length, an ellipsis is used to save space (e.g., *kukláh-kukláh-kukláh…*).

Sound does not always play an important role in identification. Cotingas, for example, rarely vocalize, while other birds are so easy to see and distinguish that they can be identified without relying on sound. In some cases, therefore, the species description does not include vocalizations.

Anyone with an interest in avian vocalizations should consult the commercially available recordings of Costa Rican bird sounds or visit www.xeno-canto.org.

Endemism. About 10% of the bird species that inhabit Costa Rica have very limited ranges and are considered regional endemics—in other words, they are species found only in the southern half of Central America and nowhere else in the world. Assuming that these species will be of special interest to

birders visiting from outside the region, they are noted in bold text and their geographic limits are given.

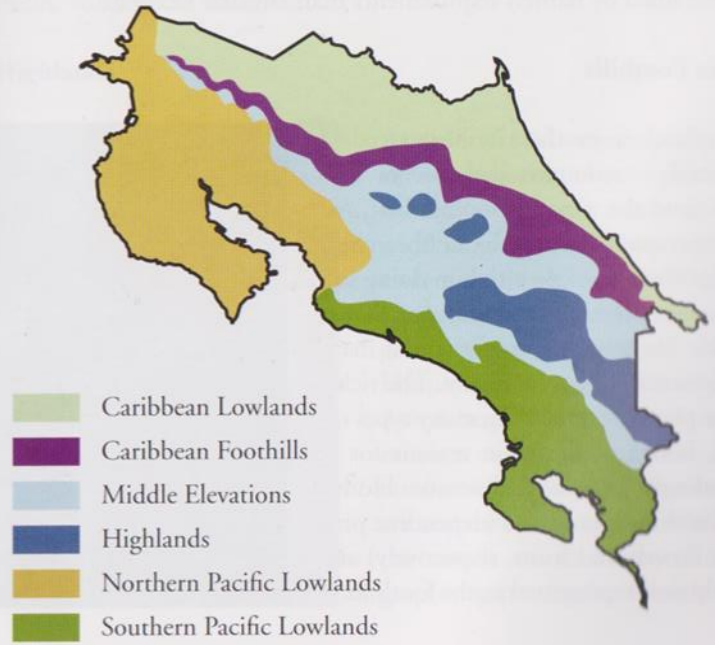
Illustrations. Many species are illustrated by multiple images when, for example, there are significant plumage differences between sexes or between adult and juvenile stages. Generally, if juvenile birds resemble adults but are simply somewhat duller, they have not been illustrated.

On a given page, perched birds are nearly always represented at the same scale. Sometimes, however, there is a change of scale on a page; this is indicated with a horizontal line that spans the page. For design reasons, the scale can change from page to page, even within a family. Birds in flight are always shown at a smaller scale—the only exception is hummingbirds—but are to scale among themselves on a given page.

Climate and Topography of Costa Rica

It may seem incredible that so many species can be packed into such a small country as Costa Rica. The key to this impressive diversity, however, lies in topography and its effect on climate. Of course, Costa Rica's location between 8 and 11 degrees north latitude—well within the tropics—also plays an important role.

Mainland Costa Rica rests atop the western end of a relatively small tectonic plate known as the Caribbean plate. This plate is pushing against the even smaller Cocos plate to the west, creating a subduction zone off Costa Rica's Pacific coast. Along with periodic earthquakes, a consequence of this geologic activity is volcanism. Over the past several million years, four volcanic mountain ranges have built up, forming a fairly continuous series of ridges aligned in a northwest-southeast orientation (see map on p. 12). This position is perpendicular to the flow of the prevailing northeast trade winds, making the mountains a barrier to the passage of these moisture-laden air currents. The resulting differences in moisture and temperature between the lowlands and highlands—and between the Caribbean and Pacific sides of the country—are the basis for the following six major life zones, each with its own unique mixture of bird species.

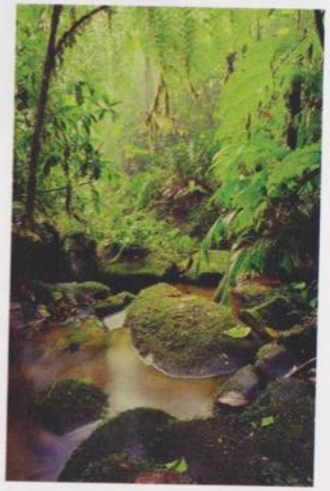


Caribbean Lowlands

This hot and humid region receives rain throughout the year, resulting in luxuriant, evergreen tropical vegetation (where it hasn't been removed for agriculture). Statistically, there are two somewhat drier periods, which occur in March and April and then in September and October, with the wettest months being July and December. However, it can rain any day of the year and at any time of day on this side of Costa Rica.

As there are essentially no impeding topographic barriers, this climatic regime extends from northern South America all the way to southern Mexico. Consequently, many of the classic Neotropical bird families (e.g., toucans, puffbirds, antbirds, cotingas, and manakins) also extend that far north. Given the extent and relative homogeneity of this climatic region, it is not surprising that few limited-range species occur in this part of Costa Rica. However, it is the place to find the Snowy Cotinga, Plain-colored Tanager, Nicaraguan Seed-Finch, and Nicaraguan Grackle (these last two perhaps more constrained by habitat requirements than climatic factors).

Caribbean Foothills



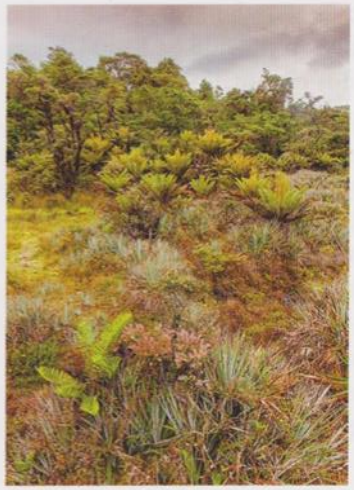
Moving inland from the Caribbean coast, one eventually encounters the base of the mountains and the very wet foothill belt. As the moist air coming in off the Caribbean Sea reaches this obstacle, it rises and, in doing so, cools. The result is rain—and lots of it. Some sites in this life zone can receive more than 20 feet (6 meters) of rain annually. The richness of the plant life, including many types of epiphytes, is one of the main reasons for a correspondingly high bird diversity. Hummingbird and tanager species (dependent primarily on flowers and fruits, respectively) are particularly well-represented in the foothills.

While mixed species flocks are an element of bird behavior in many life zones, their prevalence in the foothills is particularly notable. It also seems that a relatively high percentage of species in this habitat occur at very low population densities. Of the many species that inhabit this life zone, seventeen are limited-range species.

Middle Elevations

Moving farther upslope, precipitation levels remain high, but temperatures are noticeably lower. As a result, the classic Neotropical bird families are not as well-represented as at lower elevations. The major exception, however, is the furnariids (excluding woodcreepers), which reach their maximum diversity in the epiphyte-laden forests of middle elevations. This life zone is home to many limited-range species, including the Coppery-headed Emerald, which occurs only in Costa Rica. Like most middle-elevation species, it is equally at home on both the Caribbean and Pacific sides of the mountains.

Highlands



At the cool and wet upper elevations, diversity diminishes but endemism reaches nearly 50%, and many of the more wide-ranging species are represented by endemic subspecies (e.g., Highland Tinamou, Red-tailed Hawk, Band-tailed Pigeon, Green Violetear, Magnificent Hummingbird, Hairy Woodpecker, and American Dipper). This level of endemism is not surprising since the mountains of Costa Rica and western Panama are separated from similar elevations to the north or south by sizeable geographic gaps. Again, in this cooler life

zone, the classic Neotropical families are poorly represented and several do not occur at all.

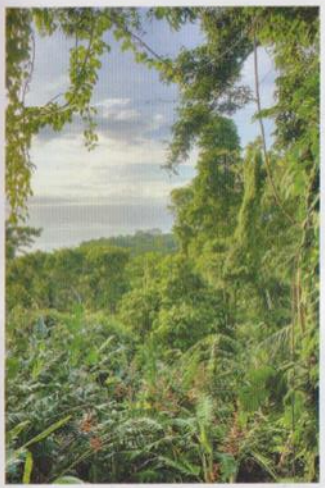
It is worth noting that altitudinal migration is a common phenomenon in the tropics, and numerous species, especially nectivores and frugivores, turn up seasonally in areas well below their normal breeding elevations. Conversely, as an apparent effect of global warming, it has become common over the last few decades for species to show up at higher than expected elevations.

Northern Pacific Lowlands

The air currents pushed along by the northeast trade winds have lost most of their moisture by the time they cross the Continental Divide and begin descending the Pacific-facing slopes. Descending dry air warms faster than rising moist air cools over the same elevation gradient; the physics of this translates into wind. Anyone who visits Santa Rosa, Rincón de la Vieja, or Palo Verde National Parks between mid-November and mid-February will likely experience this firsthand. The combination of dry breezes, constant sunshine, and lack of precipitation after the end of November (most years) quickly desiccates the vegetation in the northern half of Costa Rica's Pacific slope. The area would be a total desert if it were not for the fact that the trade winds eventually move north, allowing moist air from the Pacific Ocean to come onshore and cause a rainy season from mid-May to mid-November.

This harsh, seasonally dry climate continues up the Pacific side of Central America and into Mexico, and the bird species adapted to it generally have correspondingly wide ranges. In fact, many of the species inhabiting this life zone in Costa Rica are at the southern limit of their ranges (e.g., Lesser Ground-Cuckoo, Pacific Screech-Owl, Elegant Trogon, Turquoise-browed Motmot, and White-throated Magpie-Jay). The lack of year-round humidity means that few species of the classic Neotropical families inhabit this region, and even hummingbirds and tanagers are not terribly diverse.

Southern Pacific Lowlands



South of the Tárcoles River, the habitat changes quite abruptly. A short dry season, with occasional showers interspersed, results in evergreen vegetation that is fairly reminiscent of the Caribbean lowlands. The aforementioned river actually has nothing to do with this change; it is the high mountains to the east that block the trade winds more effectively than do the lower ranges in the northern half of the country, thus allowing moist Pacific air to come onshore more regularly during the dry season. The farther south you go along the coast, the shorter and less intense the dry season and the greater the precipitation.

The hot and humid conditions of this life zone mean that most of the classic Neotropical families are represented here. Interestingly, it seems that at some point this region connected with the Caribbean lowlands, but has since been isolated by drier areas to the north and south and high mountains to the east. The result is the evolution of at least thirteen species pairs, including White-crested and Black-crested Coquettes, Charming and Blue-chested Hummingbirds, Fiery-billed and Collared Aracaris, Turquoise and Lovely Cotingas, and Orange-collared and White-collared Manakins. A total of twenty-one species in this life zone have limited ranges; notably, the Black-cheeked Ant-Tanager's entire range lies within the southern part of Costa Rica.

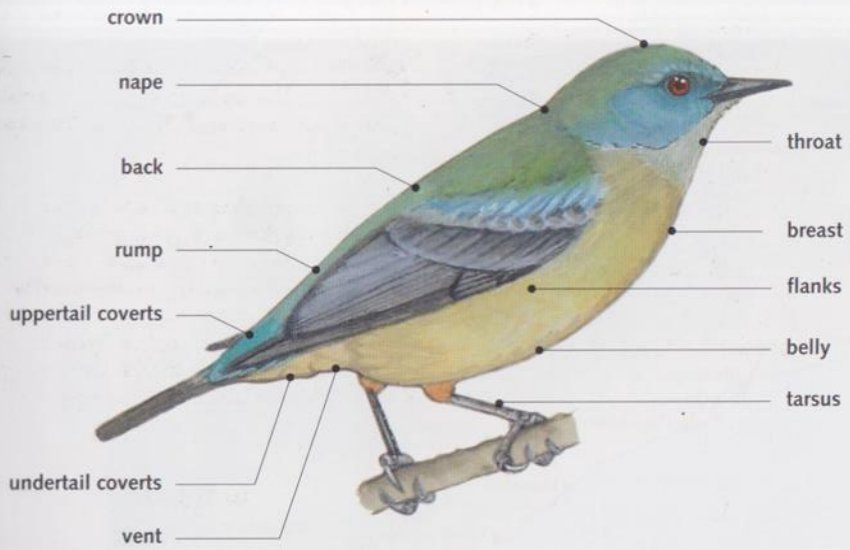
Of course, each of the preceding six major life zones comprises numerous habitat types, and many bird species are as dependent, if not more so, on habitat as they are on a given life zone. The range of the endemic Mangrove Hummingbird, for example, spans the northern and southern Pacific lowlands, but within that range the bird is confined to mangroves and their immediate vicinity. Similarly, wetland species such as herons and kingfishers are often widespread but occur only in the appropriate habitat.

Lake Nicaragua
Nicaragua
La Cruz
Brasilia de Upala
Los Chiles
Caño Negro
Las Crucitas
Santa Rosa National Park
RINCÓN DE LA VIEJA VOLCANO (1,895)
MIRAVALLES VOLCANO (2,028)
TENORIO VOLCANO (2,028)
Guanacaste Cordillera
GULF OF PAPAGAYO
Bahía Culebra
Liberia
Comunidad
Bagaces
Pelón de la Bajura
Cañas
ARENAL VOLCANO (1,633)
Lake Arenal
Laguna Pocosol
Playa Potrero
Filadelfia
Palo Verde National Park
Tamarindo
Rancho Humo
Bebedero
Monteverde
Playa Avellanas
Colorado
Abangaritos
Sarmiento
Chomes
NICOYA PENINSULA
GULF OF NICOYA
Cabo Blanco
Elevation (m)
2,000+ m
1,500 - 2,000 m
1,000 - 1,500 m
500 - 1,000 m
0 - 500 m
National Parks
Volcanoes
Rivers
Cities
Costa Rica
N
W
E
S
NORTHERN CENTRAL CARIBBEAN LOWLANDS
Caribbean Sea
Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí
Tortuguero National Park
Ciudad Quesada (San Carlos)
Horquetas de Sarapiquí
Parismina
POÁS VOLCANO (2,704)
Montaña Azul
BARVA VOLCANO
Guápiles
Central Cordillera
San Ramón
Grecia
Palmares
CENTRAL VALLEY
TURRIALBA VOLCANO (3,329)
Siquirres
Matina
Limón
Moín
Orotina
Santa Ana
SAN JOSÉ
IRAZÚ VOLCANO (3,432)
Turrialba
El Cedral
Cartago
San Rafael de Oreamuno
Paraíso
Platanillo
Ujarrás
Cachí
Carara National Park
San Ignacio de Acosta
VALLE DE LA ESTRELLA
Cahuita
Punta Uva
Hone Creek
Kekoldi
Talamanca Cordillera
DOTA REGION
CERRO DE LA MUERTE
Esterillos
Parrita
Mount Chirripó (3,819)
Isla Damas
Quepos
Playa del Rey
San Isidro de El General
Panama
Dominical
Buenos Aires
Uvita
S.Pacific Intermontane Valleys
Pacific Ocean
Coronado
de Térraba
Cortés
Palmar Norte
COTO BRUS VALLEY
Térraba
Sierpe
San Vito
CAÑO ISLAND
Gamba
Golfito
COTO COLORADO VALLEY
OSA PENINSULA
Puerto Jiménez
Corcovado National Park
Zancudo
GOLFO DULCE
Carate
Laurel
Pavones

Anatomical Features

In the species descriptions, the author has used simple, nontechnical terms whenever possible. Nonetheless, in describing the various external features of birds, some technical terms become inevitable. If you are new to birding, you might want to take a few moments to familiarize yourself with the terms explained here. (See glossary, p. 20, for definitions of non-anatomical terms.)

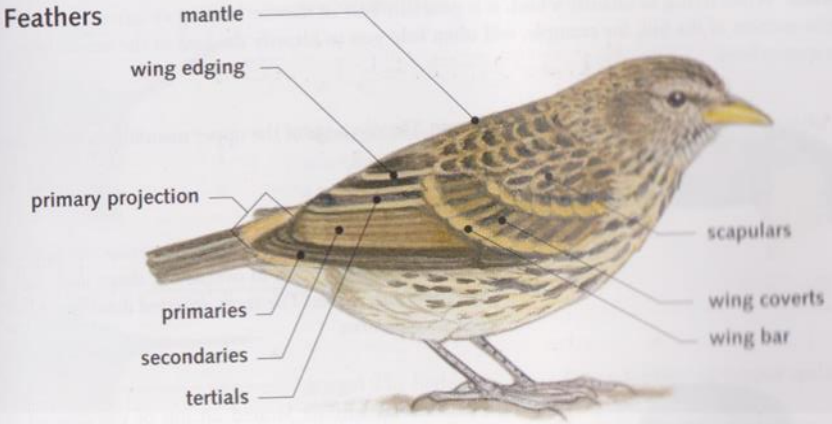
Upperparts: Together, the crown, nape, back, rump, and uppertail coverts (the feathers that cover the base of the upper side of the tail) are known as the *upperparts*, or *dorsum*. Note: The unfeathered parts of a bird (i.e., beak, cere, orbital area, legs, and feet) are referred to as the *soft parts*.



Underparts: Together, the throat, breast, flanks, belly, vent, and undertail coverts are known as the *underparts*. The vent is the feathered area around the anal opening; the undertail coverts are the feathers that cover the base of the underside of the tail. In technical parlance, the leg is referred to as the *tarsus* (plural: *tarsi*).

Crown: Although the entire top of the head can be called the *crown*, the anterior portion is often distinctly colored and termed the *forecrown*, or *forehead*. The terms *midcrown* and *hindcrown* refer to the center and rear of the crown, respectively. The rear portion of the head, or back of the neck, is known as the *nape*.

Wing Feathers



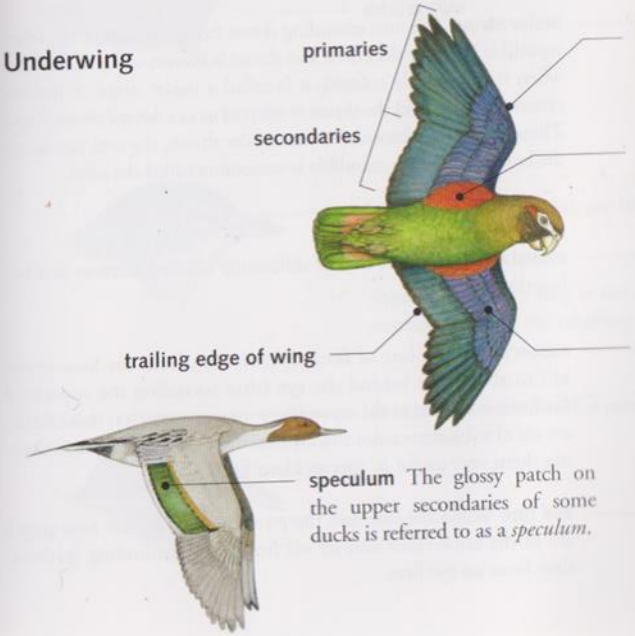
Features on the wings often help in identification. The feathers covering the juncture of the wing and body, corresponding to the shoulder, are known as the *scapulars*. Together, the scapulars and the upper back are termed the *mantle*. The several rows of feathers that cover the base of the flight feathers are the wing coverts. When the tips of these feathers are distinctly colored, they form wing bars.

The flight feathers are composed of three contiguous sets of feathers, which, from the inner to the outer portion of the extended wing, are known as *tertials* (three innermost feathers), *secondaries*, and *primaries*. When the wing is folded, these feathers stack up with the innermost of the three tertials on top and the outermost of the nine or ten primaries on the bottom.

A feature that is sometimes useful in identification is the distance that the tip of the outermost folded primary extends beyond the longest secondaries and tertials; this is known as the *primary projection*.

The term *wing edging* is used to describe a lighter color on the edge of each flight feather; this lighter color imparts a striped look to the wing.

Underwing



Head: When trying to identify a bird, it is generally best to start by looking at various parts of the head. An inspection of the bill, for example, will often help you to identify the bird to the family level, if not to the species level.

culmen The top edge of the upper mandible is called the *culmen*.

upper mandible

lower mandible The bill (or beak) comprises the upper and lower mandibles. In addition to overall bill shape and size, note any coloration differences. The term *decurved* describes a bill that has a downward curve.

cere Birds' nostrils are located on top of the base of the upper mandible. In some families (e.g., hawks, falcons, owls, pigeons, and parrots), the nostrils open through a fleshy covering called a *cere*. The color of the cere can aid in differentiating among certain species of raptors.

supraloral The area above the lore.

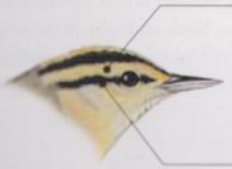
lore The area between the base of the bill and the eye.

nuchal collar A distinctly colored area across the nape.

lateral throat stripe

malar stripe The area extending down from the base of the lower mandible between the cheek and throat is known as the *malar*, and when it is distinctly colored, it is called a *malar stripe*. A line between the malar and the throat is referred to as a *lateral throat stripe*. Though generally considered part of the throat, the area just below the base of the lower mandible is sometimes called the *chin*.

moustachial stripe A line of differently colored feathers just below the ear coverts.



superciliary The line of feathers extending from the base of the bill to above and behind the eye (thus including the supraloral feathers) is known as the *superciliary*. In many species, these feathers are of a different color than the contiguous head feathers, making them very useful in species identification.

eye line When the lore and the postocular stripe (see next page) are of the same color and set off from the surrounding feathers, they form an eye line.

postocular stripe

When a differently colored line of feathers extends behind the eye, it is referred to as a *postocular stripe*. Note that some birds show only a postocular spot.

postocular spot

gorget The highly iridescent throat feathers on certain species of hummingbirds are known as the *gorget*.

eye ring

Most species of birds have a narrow ring of very short feathers around the eye. When these feathers are of a different color than the surrounding ones, they form an eye ring. In some species, the area around the eye (and sometimes beyond) is featherless. This bare area is referred to as *orbital skin*, or, when it forms a circle, as an *orbital ring*.

orbital skin

spectacles (formed with the lore)

Sometimes an eye ring is the same color as either the lore or a postocular stripe; the resulting pattern is called *spectacles*.

spectacles (formed with a postocular stripe)

mask The term *mask* is often used when the area around the eye is a darker color—usually black—than the rest of the head. More often than not, the mask includes the lore and ear coverts, but the term may be used in reference to little more than the lore.

ear coverts & ear patch The ear coverts, or cheek, are a distinct group of short feathers that cover the ear opening, which is located just below and behind the eye. When the feathers of the ear coverts, or sometimes just those along their outer border, are of a different color and contrast with the feathers surrounding them, the result is an ear patch.

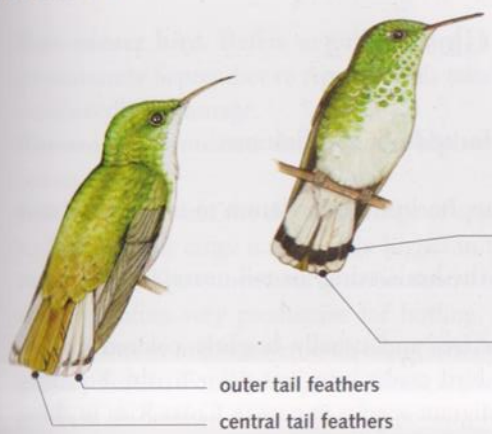
crown patch Some species, including many of the New World flycatchers, have a colorful crown patch of erectile feathers that is generally kept concealed beneath the crown feathers.

crest When most or all of the crown feathers are capable of being raised, they are termed a *crest*.

hood The term *hood* has variable usage, though it generally indicates the crown, nape, and lower throat (excluding the forehead, eyes, and chin).

half-hood A half-hood is made up of the crown and cheeks, but does not include the throat.

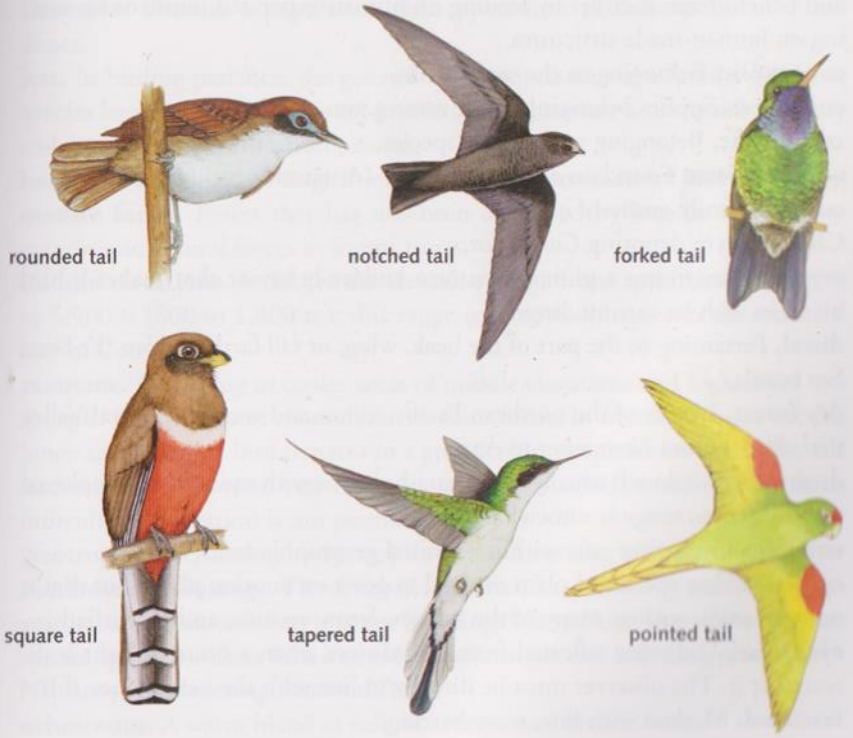
Tail Feathers



subterminal band A distinctly colored band above the tail tip is called a *subterminal band.*

terminal band The tip of the tail is composed of the ends of all the tail feathers, and if they are of a distinct color they form a terminal band.

Tail Shapes: In addition to coloration or markings, note the shape of the tail, especially paying attention to whether the tip is rounded, notched, forked, square, tapered, or pointed. Also note the proportion of the tail length with respect to the body.



Glossary

See Anatomical Features (p. 14) for additional definitions.

barred. Marked with lines that are horizontal in relation to the upright axis of the bird.
basal. Pertaining to the part of the beak, wing, or tail nearest to the base. See **distal**.
breeding plumage. The distinctive, and usually brightly colored and/or boldly marked, plumage that a bird molts into just prior to the breeding season. Many North American migrant species appear in Costa Rica in these plumages in March and April. See **nonbreeding plumage**.
brood parasite. A species that deposits its egg(s) in the nest(s) of other species, thus freeing itself from all nesting chores.
buffy. Having a creamy, light-brown color.
canopy. The uppermost level of a forest.
commensal. Describes birds that live in close proximity to human society and benefit from it either by feeding on human-generated refuse or by nesting on human-made structures.
congeneric. Belonging to the same genus.
congeners. Species belonging to the same genus.
conspecific. Belonging to the same species.
cosmopolitan. Found on all six continents (Antarctica excluded).
covey. A family group of quails.
CR. Acronym denoting *Costa Rica*.
cryptic. Describing a plumage pattern and/or behavior that makes a bird blend in with its surroundings.
distal. Pertaining to the part of the beak, wing, or tail farthest from the base. See **basal**.
dry forest. Forests of the northern Pacific region and western Central Valley that are dry from November to April.
dusky. Dark-colored, usually dark grayish; but as with most colors employed in bird names, usage is somewhat varied.
endemic. Occurring only within a limited geographic area.
epiphyte. Any species of plant evolved to grow on another plant (but that is not parasitic), such as many of the mosses, ferns, orchids, and bromeliads.
eye-shine. The color reflected from a bird's eye when a beam of light is directed at it. The observer must be directly in line with the beam to see this.
fasciated. Marked with fine, wavy barring.

first-winter bird. Refers to gulls during the first winter after hatching (approximately September to April). Gulls take two or more years to reach adult nonbreeding plumage.
flotsam. Accumulated debris at the high-water line or floating in the open ocean.
foothills. Indicates the elevation range of approximately 1,300 to 2,600 ft (400 to 800 m); this range is somewhat higher in the southern half of Costa Rica.
forest edge. The transitional zone between a forested area and a more open area, which is often very productive for birding. Forest canopy species sometimes come down to much lower levels along this "vertical canopy."
gallery forest. Forest that grows along a river or stream.
garden. A catchall term referring to any human-altered environment that still contains some bushes and trees.
highlands. Indicates the upper portions of mountain slopes, from approximately 4,900 to 12,500 ft (1,500 to 3,800 m).
humid forest. Forest that remains largely evergreen, but receives less rain than **wet forest**; one indicator of this type of forest is the paucity of epiphytic plants.
irruptive. Denotes a population that experiences periodic peaks of abundance.
jizz. In birding parlance, the general visual impression of a family, genus, or species based on overall size, appearance, and behavior; a subjective but very real tool in the identification process.
lowlands. The elevation range from sea level to approximately 1,600 ft (500 m).
mature forest. Forest that has not been disturbed by human activities or cataclysmic natural forces in recent times.
middle elevations. Indicates the elevation range from approximately 2,600 to 5,900 ft (800 to 1,800 m); this range is somewhat higher in the southern half of Costa Rica.
montane. Pertaining to cooler areas of middle elevations and highlands.
morph. One of two or more different color forms in which a species occurs. Since an individual bird remains in a given color morph for its entire life, the author prefers this term over the often-used *phase*, which could imply that an individual's coloration is not permanent.
Neotropical. Pertaining to the tropics of the Americas.
nonbreeding plumage. The drabber, and often less obviously marked, plumage that a bird shows when it is not breeding. Many North American migrant species appear in Costa Rica in these dull plumages. See **breeding plumage**.
NP. Acronym denoting *National Park*.
ochraceous. A warm blend of yellow, orange, and brown tones.

pantropical. Pertaining to the tropics around the globe.
paramo. A habitat found above timberline that is comprised of low vegetation.
passerine. Any of the so-called "perching birds" or "songbirds." More technically, any species in the order Passeriformes, which includes all of the species in the second half of the complete country list (p. 383), beginning with the family Thamnophilidae.
pelagic. Pertaining to the open ocean.
precocial. Refers to birds that are relatively mobile upon hatching.
race. Synonymous with **subspecies**; usually mentioned when there is some notable difference between two such groups.
raptor. A bird of prey (i.e., a hawk, eagle, falcon, or owl).
rufous. A reddish-brown color.
sally. A flight made in pursuit of a prey item.
salt ponds. Shallow depressions (usually constructed in areas that were originally mangrove swamps) that are filled with sea water, which is then left to evaporate, leaving salt crystals. Many shorebirds utilize these areas at high tide, both to forage in the ponds and rest on the dikes that separate them.
second growth. Vegetation comprised of fast-growing trees, vines, and shrubs that colonize areas affected either by natural causes (fire, flooding, volcanic eruptions, landslides, etc.) or cutting by humans.
shorebird. Refers principally to members of the sandpiper, plover, and stilt families, most of which are typically encountered near coastal areas.
streaked. Synonymous with **striped**.
striped. Marked with lines that are vertical in relation to the upright axis of the bird.
subspecies. Synonymous with **race**.
sympatric. Occurring in the same geographic area.
timberline. The upper elevation limit of tree growth; in Costa Rica this occurs at about 10,200 ft (3,100 m).
understory. The lower level of forest habitat, from ground level to about 13 ft (4 m) up.
vermiculation. A pattern of wavy lines.
wader. Refers principally to members of the heron, ibis, and stork families, which are typically encountered in wetlands, where their long legs enable them to wade in shallow water.
wet forest. Forest that receives enough annual moisture (at least 8 ft [2.5 m]) for most of the plant species to remain evergreen; wetter than **humid forest**.

Species Accounts and Illustrations

Tinamous

TINAMIDAE. These plump-bodied, small-headed, essentially tailless terrestrial birds are far more often heard than seen. Leg color, habitat, and voice are useful keys to identification, since CR's five native species are somewhat similar in appearance. Tinamous are opportunistic feeders and will take fallen fruits and seeds as well as arthropods and small frogs and lizards. Forest-dwelling species typically nest between buttress roots of trees; eggs are laid on the ground. The male incubates the eggs and cares for the precocial chicks during their first few weeks.

Highland Tinamou *Nothocercus bonapartei*

15 in (38 cm). Nearly as large as the Great Tinamou and also with **gray legs**, but note **rufous below**, becoming more buffy on belly; also has **buffy spots on back**. Uncommon in middle-elevation forest (where there could be some overlap with Great Tinamou) and highland forest; from 3,900 to 8,200 ft (1,200 to 2,500 m). The call is a monotonous series of harsh, nasal notes that completely lack the melodious quality of other CR tinamous.

Great Tinamou *Tinamus major*

17 in (43 cm). Mostly grayish-brown, with **black barring posteriorly** and **gray legs**. Fairly common in lowlands; decreasingly common up to 5,600 ft (1,700 m). It is sought after as a game bird and can be quite wary, but in protected areas is often fairly tame. Prefers to walk away when threatened, but if startled, will burst into flight with an explosive whirring of wings. Inhabits mature wet forest, where its far-carrying, clear, but quavering, whistle is a characteristic sound.

Little Tinamou *Crypturellus soui*

9 in (23 cm). A small **unpatterned** tinamou with **dull-yellow legs**. It is the most widespread member of the family in CR and is fairly common in wet and humid regions; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). This species' preference for tangled, dense, second-growth vegetation makes it exceedingly difficult to see. It gives a short, clear whistle that rises, then falls slightly, reminiscent of a horse's whinny.

Thicket Tinamou *Crypturellus cinnamomeus*

11 in (28 cm). A **red-legged** and **heavily barred** tinamou of the dry forest. Female has more obvious and extensive barring on breast. Fairly common in northern Pacific lowlands and foothills; to 3,300 ft (1,000 m). Forages in both mature forest and second growth. A pure single-note whistle discloses its whereabouts.

Slaty-breasted Tinamou *Crypturellus boucardi*

11 in (28 cm). The Caribbean counterpart of the Thicket Tinamou; both have **red legs**, but Slaty-breasted Tinamou has an **unmarked gray breast**. Female has buffy barring on wing coverts. Uncommon in the northern half of the Caribbean lowlands; to 2,300 ft (700 m). Roams the floor of mature forest. The characteristic call is an even, mellow tone with a distinct catch in the middle.

CRACIDAE. An essentially Neotropical family of large, chicken-like birds. Despite their size, cracids are quite arboreal and can also fly well (although they frequently glide). Though attired in somber plumage, many species have brightly colored soft parts. In unprotected areas, they are sought after as game, and hence are increasingly rare. They feed on fruit and vegetation.

Great Curassow — *Crax rubra*

36 in (91 cm). Large size and **curly crest feathers** render both sexes distinctive. Some females in northern Pacific are conspicuously barred. Uncommon to rare in protected areas throughout the country; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Individuals and pairs forage on the ground in mature forest, though they readily fly up into trees to escape danger as well as to roost. Males emit such a deep bass *uuuhm* that the sonic waves are almost felt.

Gray-headed Chachalaca — *Ortalis cinereiceps*

20 in (51 cm). Told apart from Plain Chachalaca by **rufous primaries**, which are very obvious in flight and usually visible on perched birds. Fairly common in wet lowlands and foothills; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Favors forest edge and second growth; mostly arboreal and in small groups that typically fly in follow-the-leader fashion from one tree to the next. Produces a variety of sounds varying from soft, high notes to rather loud clucking, but does not say *chachalaca*.

Plain Chachalaca — *Ortalis vetula*

21 in (53 cm). Distinguished from Gray-headed Chachalaca by **lack of rufous in primaries**. Fairly common in hills of Nicoya Peninsula and rare in northwestern lowlands. Somewhat arboreal; groups forage in dry forest, humid forest, and thickets. Gives the characteristic *chachaLAca* call at dawn and dusk.

Black Guan — *Chamaepetes unicolor*

24 in (61 cm). The **blue facial skin** should preclude confusion with vultures and all other large, black birds; also note red eye and reddish-pink legs. Fairly common in protected areas of highlands, uncommon to rare elsewhere; from 3,600 ft (1,100 m) to timberline. Mostly arboreal, usually seen singly or in pairs; favors mature forest, but also comes to fruiting trees in adjacent gardens. In flight, makes a startlingly loud rattle with its wings. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Crested Guan — *Penelope purpurascens*

35 in (89 cm). The **red flap of bare skin on throat** and **white flecking on breast** differentiate this from other species of similar size. Still fairly common in protected areas throughout the country; to 5,900 ft (1,800 m) in southern Pacific, elsewhere to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Surprisingly arboreal for its size; pairs or small groups feed on fruit and tender foliage in middle and upper levels of mature forest, advanced second growth, and forest edge. Rarely comes to the ground except to feed on fallen fruit. Utters a loud *klah-klah-klah*, repeated at length with varying pitch and speed; also produces a deep wing-rustling noise in flight.

ODONTOPHORIDAE. Essentially terrestrial birds that feed mainly on tubers, grubs, seeds, and fallen fruit. Most of the CR species are forest dwellers, and their mottled brown dorsal patterns keep them well camouflaged. Since they can be very difficult to see, their calls are the best clue to their presence. The colors on the head and throat are key identification features.

Buffy-crowned Wood-Partridge *Dendrortyx leucophrys*

13 in (33 cm). Long legs and tail give it a chicken-like aspect; no other CR quail has **pale iris** and **streaked neck**. Uncommon in Central Valley, Dota region, and Cerro de la Muerte; from 3,300 to 9,200 ft (1,000 to 2,800 m). Small coveys forage in thickets, second growth, forest openings, and shaded coffee plantations. This species' CR common name derives from its raucous call (*chir-ras-quá*).

Marbled Wood-Quail *Odontophorus gujanensis*

10 in (25 cm). The **red orbital skin** and dark iris are distinctive. Uncommon in southern Pacific, from lowlands to middle elevations; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Small coveys roam the floor of mature wet forest and adjacent advanced second growth. At dawn and dusk, birds call with a repeated, rollicking *klá-ka-wáh-hah*.

Black-eared Wood-Quail *Odontophorus melanotis*

10 in (25 cm). The **dark throat** and **rufous breast and belly** are diagnostic. Rare in Caribbean lowlands and foothills; to 3,300 ft (1,000 m). Small coveys roam the floor of mature wet forest and adjacent advanced second growth. Its call is a repeated, gabbling *kukláh-kukláh-kukláh…* **Ranges from Honduras to Panama.**

Black-breasted Wood-Quail *Odontophorus leucolaemus*

10 in (25 cm). The only CR wood-quail with a **black breast**; the **white on the throat** is variable, but helps in ID when visible. Fairly common at middle elevations of Caribbean slope and on Pacific slope of Guanacaste and Tilarán Cordilleras, uncommon in Dota region; from 2,300 to 5,900 ft (700 to 1,800 m). Coveys forage on floor of wet montane forest and adjacent advanced second growth. Covey members chorus a fast, rollicking *chu-chu-wi-chi-chú*. **Endemic to CR and Panama.**

Spotted Wood-Quail *Odontophorus guttatus*

10 in (25 cm). The combination of **streaked black-and-white throat** and **spotted underparts** is diagnostic. Uncommon on Central and Talamanca Cordilleras; from 3,300 ft (1,000 m) to timberline on Pacific slope, and from 4,900 ft (1,500 m) to timberline on Caribbean slope. Small coveys feed on the ground in mature highland forest, thickets, second growth, and forest openings. At dawn, birds repeat a loud *hu-wit, hu-wit, hu-wit-tsú*.

Tawny-faced Quail *Rhynchortyx cinctus*

7 in (18 cm). The male's **tawny face** and **gray breast** are distinctive; female lacks tawny face, but note **white stripe on side of head** and **barring on underparts**. Rare in northern central Caribbean lowlands and foothills, also rare on Pacific slope of Guanacaste Cordillera; to 2,600 ft (800 m). Pairs or small coveys move furtively on floor of mature wet forest. Makes a soft cooing sound.

New World Quail

Crested Bobwhite *Colinus cristatus*

8 in (20 cm). The white-spotted underparts set it apart from all but the Spotted Wood-Quail (p. 28), but note that the latter species occurs in different habitats. Northern Pacific race is common in northern Pacific and uncommon in Central Valley; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Southern Pacific race is rare in lowlands on mainland side of Golfo Dulce; also reported from hills south of San Isidro de El General. Favors grasslands and brushy fields, foraging in coveys of up to a dozen or more birds. Whistles *whit, whit, WEit*.

Sungrebe

HELIORNITHIDAE. A small tropical family with one species in Africa, one in Asia, and one in the New World. All three species—collectively known as *finfoots*—have brightly colored, lobed feet. Though mostly seen swimming, Sungrebes are equally agile on land and on branches. Unlike true grebes, the Sungrebe rarely dives.

Sungrebe *Heliornis fulica*

11 in (28 cm). In size and behavior, suggests a duck or grebe, but none of those have **black-and-white striping on head and neck**. Fairly common in Caribbean lowlands, rare in Golfo Dulce region. Favors slow-moving rivers and streams with banks covered by overhanging vegetation, from which it gleans arthropods, frogs, and small lizards. Makes a nasal, yapping *yeh-yeh-yeh!*

Grebes

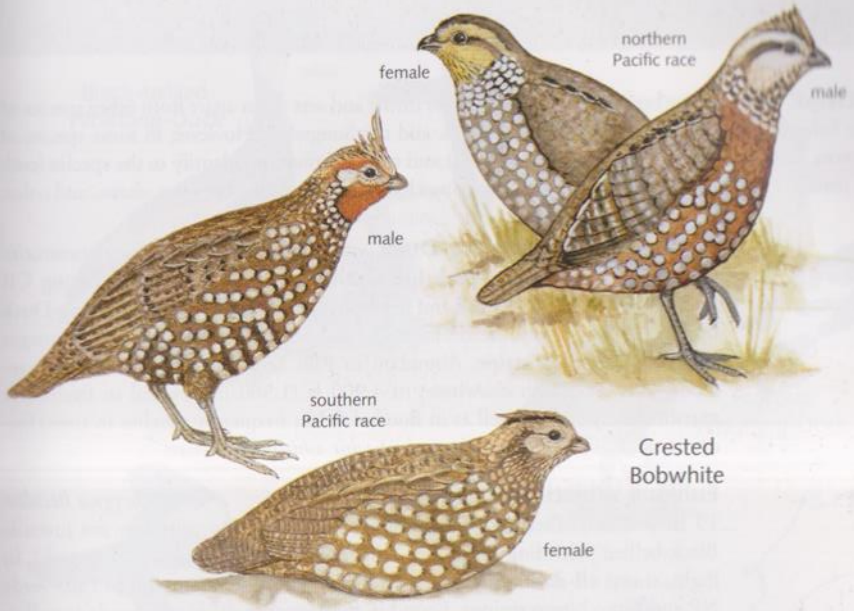
PODICIPEDIDAE. Superficially duck-like birds found on ponds, lakes, and reservoirs. Skilled divers, grebes catch a variety of aquatic prey underwater, often resurfacing at some distance from where they submerged. The two resident species are best told apart by eye color and by bill shape and color.

Least Grebe *Tachybaptus dominicus*

9 in (23 cm). Smaller and somewhat darker than the Pied-billed Grebe; note **thin, black bill** and intense **yellow eye**. Common in the Central Valley and northern Pacific; fairly common elsewhere, but rare in Tortuguero NP region; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Gives a sputtering rattle that recalls a White-throated Crake (p. 88), but is slightly less harsh.

Pied-billed Grebe *Podilymbus podiceps*

13 in (33 cm). Larger and somewhat lighter in body color than the Least Grebe; note **thick, pale bill** and **dark eye**. In breeding plumage, birds have a distinctive dark ring around the bill. Widespread but uncommon; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Utters a series of even-pitched notes that lasts about ten seconds and sounds like a hoarse laugh: *hah-hah-hah-hah…*



ANATIDAE. The peculiar broad bill readily identifies ducks and sets them apart from other species of similar behavior (e.g., grebes, cormorants, gallinules, and the Sungrebe). However, in some species of the genera *Anas* and *Aythya*, females are quite similar and can be difficult to identify to the species level. Wing pattern in flight can be helpful, as well as paying close attention to the bill's size, shape, and color.

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna autumnalis*

21 in (53 cm). The **rose-pink bill and feet** of adult are unique among CR ducks. Juvenile has dusky bill and feet; told apart from Fulvous Whistling-Duck by grayish (not tawny) head and neck, and plain back. In flight, all plumages show a **white wing stripe**. Abundant in Palo Verde NP and Caño Negro regions, fairly common elsewhere; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Found in freshwater marshes and ponds as well as in flooded fields; frequently perches in trees; forages at night. Whistles a high-pitched *whit-whit-wee-wee-wee*.

Fulvous Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna bicolor*

19 in (48 cm). Perched or swimming birds could be mistaken for juvenile Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, but note **tawny head and neck** (not grayish). In flight, shows **all-dark wing** and **white U on rump**. Uncommon in Palo Verde NP and Caño Negro regions. Found in freshwater marshes and ponds as well as in flooded fields.

Muscovy Duck *Cairina moschata*

Male 33 in (84 cm); female 25 in (64 cm). Large size of male and conspicuous white patch on leading edge of wing should preclude any confusion. Female shows less white in wing than male. Juvenile is dark brownish with only a small white wing patch. Note that many domesticated birds exist in CR—these often show some white (in addition to the white in the wing) due to crossing with "barnyard ducks." Habitat, location, and their wariness of people are the best clues as to whether birds are truly wild. Fairly common in Palo Verde NP region, rare elsewhere in lowlands. Favors wooded wetlands and forest streams, but also feeds in open fields; perches and roosts in trees.

Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris*

17 in (43 cm). **Gray bill with white ring and black tip** is diagnostic on both sexes. Male further distinguished from both male scaups by **black back** and **gray flanks**; female further distinguished from female scaups by **narrow white eye ring**. In flight, both sexes show **gray primaries and secondaries**. Uncommon winter resident in Palo Verde NP region, rare elsewhere; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m); from late Oct to March. Forages by diving, hence found on deeper, open areas of ponds and marshes.

Lesser Scaup *Aythya affinis*

16 in (41 cm). Nearly identical to Greater Scaup (p. 373), but in flight shows white only in secondaries. Male similar to male Ring-necked Duck, though white back—barred with black—looks lighter; also note **white flanks**. Female set apart from female Ring-necked Duck by **lack of eye ring**; also note greater contrast between white feathers at base of bill and dark head. Fairly common winter resident in Palo Verde NP region and Central Valley, rare elsewhere; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m); from mid-Nov to March. Found on freshwater ponds; forages by diving.

American Wigeon *Anas americana*

20 in (51 cm). The male's **white crown** is distinctive; female has grayish head and neck. Both sexes have a **light-bluish bill with dark tip**. Uncommon winter resident from Oct to March; mostly in Palo Verde NP region, but also occurs in Caño Negro region and Central Valley; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Found on ponds and freshwater marshes.

Blue-winged Teal *Anas discors*

15 in (38 cm). The **white crescent** on male's face is diagnostic. Female virtually identical to female Cinnamon Teal; also resembles female Northern Shoveler and female Green-winged Teal. In flight, both male and female show light-blue wing coverts (as do Cinnamon Teal and Northern Shoveler). Abundant migrant in Palo Verde NP and Caño Negro regions and in Central Valley, uncommon elsewhere; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m); from Sept to April (a few present year-round). Prefers shallow ponds and freshwater marshes.

Cinnamon Teal *Anas cyanoptera*

16 in (41 cm). A **black bill** distinguishes the striking male of this species from the male Masked Duck (p. 36). Nonbreeding male resembles female, but has warmer reddish tones on head and breast, and has red eye. Female is virtually identical to female Blue-winged Teal, but has slightly less contrast in facial pattern; also very similar to both female Northern Shoveler and female Green-winged Teal. Rare winter resident in Palo Verde NP region, from Nov to March; casual in Central Valley. Usually found in association with Blue-winged Teals.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

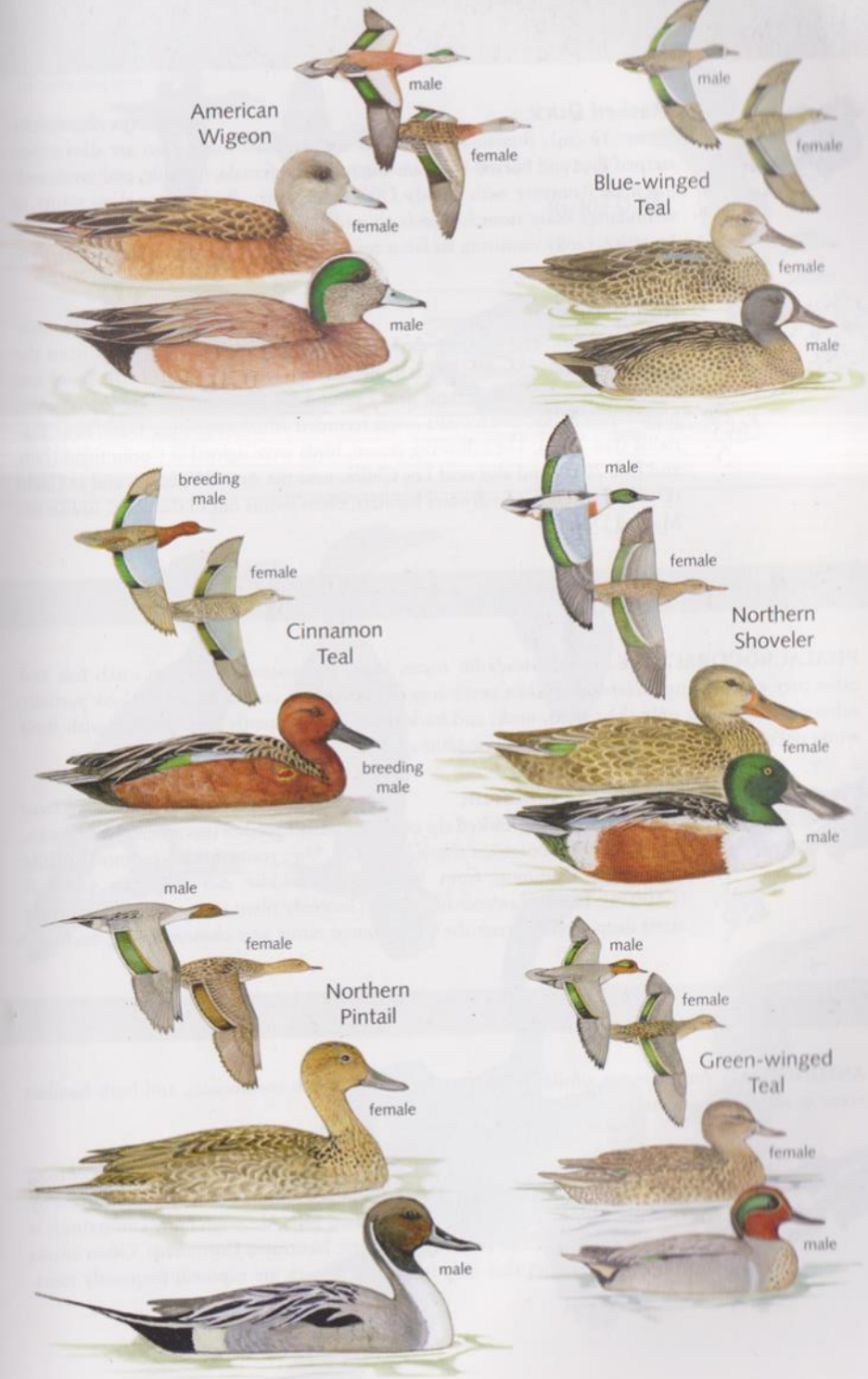
19 in (48 cm). Contrasting dark and light pattern of male is unique. Female resembles female teals, but has a **spatulate bill** (grayish with orange edges) that is longer than the head. In flight, both sexes show bluish-gray wing coverts. Uncommon winter resident in Palo Verde NP and Caño Negro regions and in Central Valley; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m); from Oct to March. Found on ponds and freshwater marshes.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*

21 in (53 cm). Male readily distinguished by **long neck with white stripe** extending up the side. Female best identified by her **slender build** and **pointed tail**; the latter is especially noticeable in flight, when **brown speculum** is also visible. Previously much more common, now a rare winter resident in Palo Verde NP and Caño Negro regions and in Central Valley; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m); from late Sept to Feb. Favors ponds and open areas in shallow freshwater marshes.

Green-winged Teal *Anas crecca*

14 in (36 cm). The male's **green-and-chestnut head** is definitive; female resembles other female teals and female Northern Shoveler. In flight, both sexes show a **buffy stripe** between **gray-brown wing coverts** and **green speculum**. Casual winter resident, with most sight reports coming from the northern Pacific lowlands; also reported from Cocos Island.



Ducks

Masked Duck *Nomonyx dominicus*

13 in (33 cm). Breeding male's **blue bill** and rich coloration are distinctive; **striped face** and **barred back** are diagnostic on female, juvenile, and nonbreeding male (compare with Ruddy Duck). In flight, all plumages show white in secondaries. Rare from lowlands to middle elevations; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Secretive, rarely venturing far from cover of aquatic vegetation; dives for food in shallow water.

Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis*

15 in (38 cm). The **entirely dark cap** down to the eye sets it apart from the somewhat similar Masked Duck in all plumages. First confirmed CR record was of one female at a catfish farm near Comunidad (Nov 2010). A group of seven birds—two males, five females—was recorded at the Angostura Dam, near Turrialba (Jan 2011). The following season, birds were sighted at Comunidad (Nov and Dec 2011) and also near Los Chiles, near the Arenal Volcano, and at Cachí (Dec 2011). Prefers freshwater habitats; often swims out in the open, unlike the Masked Duck.

Cormorants

PHALACROCORACIDAE. Aquatic birds (of rivers, lakes, and coastal areas) that catch fish and other prey while diving underwater. When swimming on the surface, cormorants often look partially submerged, showing only their head, neck, and back. Birds are frequently seen perched with their wings outstretched as they dry their permeable plumage. Only one species occurs in CR.

Neotropic Cormorant *Phalacrocorax brasilianus*

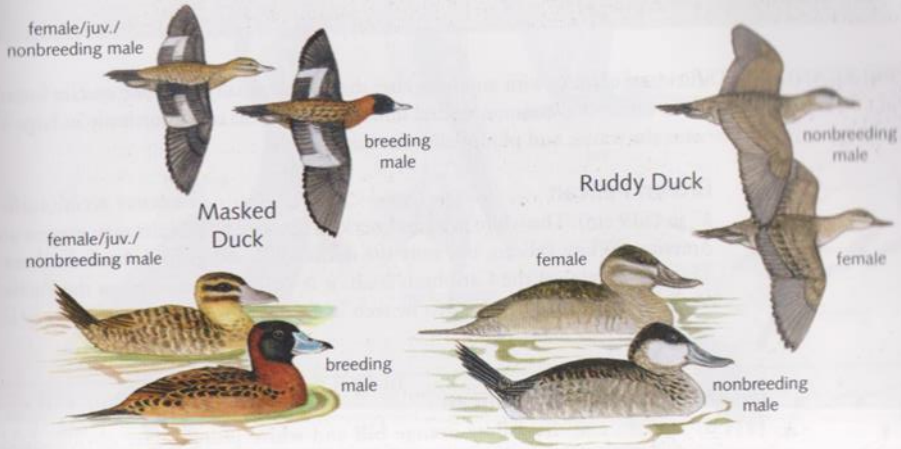
26 in (66 cm). The **hooked tip of the bill** distinguishes this species from ducks, grebes, and the somewhat similar Anhinga. Very young birds have mostly white underparts. Common from lowlands to middle elevations; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Favors slow-moving water. Generally silent except at roosts, where it utters deep grunts (hence the CR common name *pato chancho*, or pig duck).

Anhingas

ANHINGIDAE. Anhingas are similar in appearance and habits to cormorants, and both families occur in similar aquatic habitats.

Anhinga *Anhinga anhinga*

35 in (89 cm). The Anhinga is distinguished from the Neotropic Cormorant by its longer, slimmer neck and **long, pointed bill**. Although fairly common, it is typically less numerous than the sympatric Neotropic Cormorant. Often swims so low in the water that only its head and neck are exposed; frequently soars. Usually silent.



Pelicans

PELECANIDAE. Difficult to confuse with anything else; there is essentially only one species found in CR, the Brown Pelican, which is a common coastal inhabitant. Pelicans soar effortlessly in large V formations, skim low over the waves, and plunge-dive for fish.

Brown Pelican *Pelecanus occidentalis*

47 in (119 cm). The white head and neck of nonbreeding adults may suggest an American White Pelican, but note the **darker bill** and **grayish back feathers**. Though present on the Caribbean coast, it is far more common on the Pacific coast, where hundreds can often be seen in a single day. Rests on sandbars or in trees (especially mangroves).

American White Pelican *Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*

61 in (155 cm). Its **yellow-orange bill** and **white plumage** are obvious field marks. Casual migrant; reported from Palo Verde NP (March 1977), Caño Negro region (date uncited), and the Tortuguero canal system (late 1990s).

Frigatebirds

FREGATIDAE. Graceful and elegant birds of coastal skies, frigatebirds can be seen soaring with ease on long, pointed wings or maneuvering skillfully as they harass gulls, pelicans, or boobies in hopes of making them drop their catch. They also pluck their own prey from the water's surface.

Magnificent Frigatebird *Fregata magnificens*

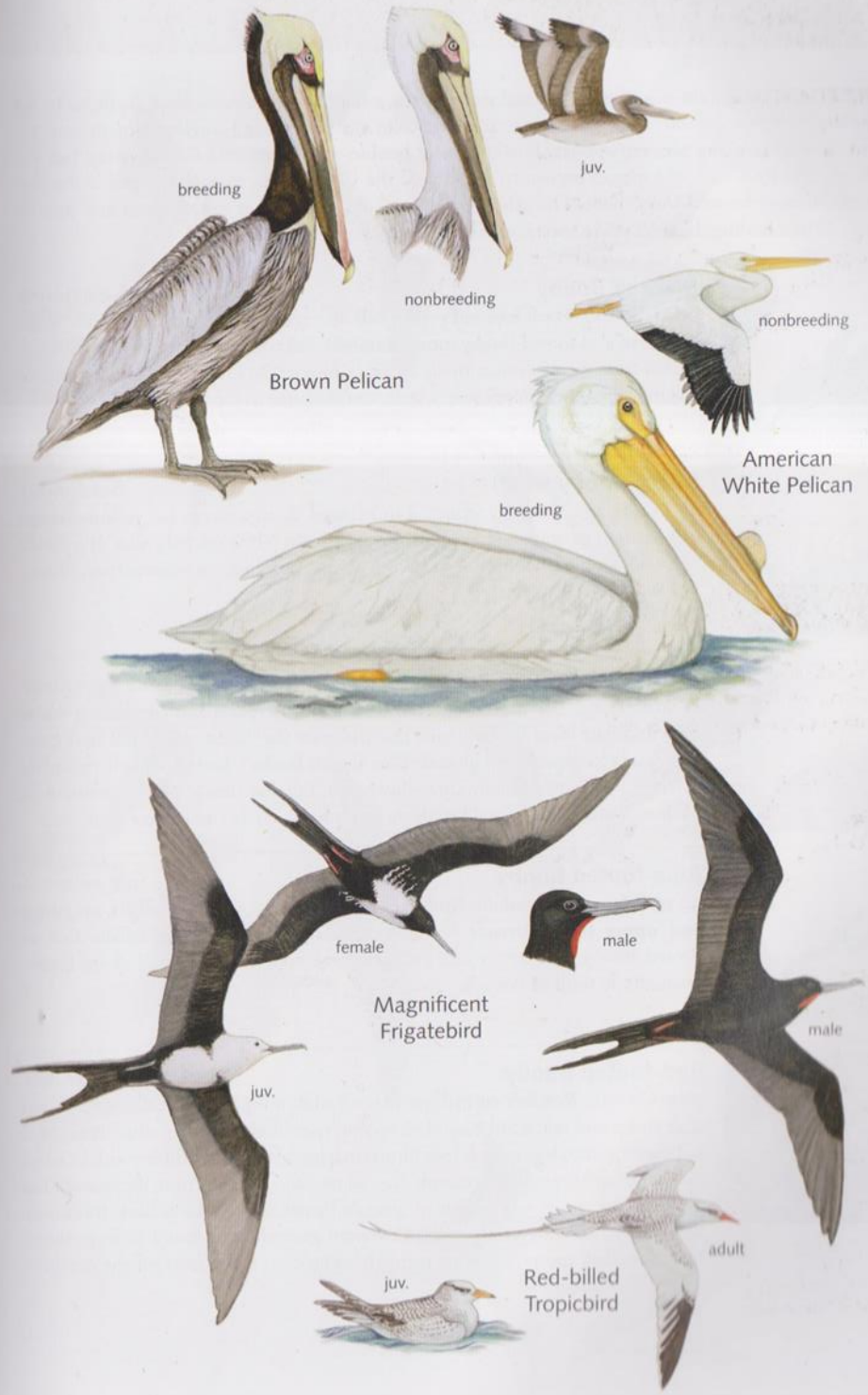
40 in (102 cm). Birds undergo a series of plumage changes from juvenile to adult stage. Early juvenile has white head. As head darkens with age, several **short white wavy lines form on the axillars** (never present in Great Frigatebird [p. 368]); these are retained, except in adult males. The only frigatebird likely to be seen from the mainland. Common along Pacific coast, fairly common along Caribbean coast; occasionally, an individual can be seen soaring far inland.

Tropicbirds

PHAETHONTIDAE. A pantropical family of three pelagic species. Tropicbirds tend to be solitary and are generally seen far out at sea or at their breeding colonies on oceanic islands. Only one species is regular in CR waters.

Red-billed Tropicbird *Phaethon aethereus*

19 in (48 cm), not including elongated central tail feathers, which extend up to 22 in (56 cm). Adult is readily identified by **red bill** and **barred upperparts**. Juvenile has a yellow bill with a dark tip, as do juveniles of the other two tropicbirds (p. 375), but is unique in having **black eye lines that connect on the nape**. Uncommon in Pacific waters, where juveniles are far more likely to be encountered than adults; to be expected in Caribbean waters. Typically flies high (10+ meters above the water) with strong, graceful wingbeats; plunge-dives for fish and squid.



Boobies

SULIDAE. Found on the open ocean and rocky islets; a booby can be recognized in flight by its pointed beak, wings, and tail. In addition to plumage color and pattern, bill and leg color are important in distinguishing between species. Five species of boobies occur in Costa Rican waters, but the Brown Booby is the only species known to breed near the Costa Rican mainland—and is the one most likely to be seen from shore. The other four species are visitors that can occur at any time of year. When feeding, boobies make spectacular headlong plunges into the water.

Masked Booby *Sula dactylatra*

34 in (86 cm). **Dark feet** and **yellow bill** distinguish adult from rare Pacific white morph of Red-footed Booby (not illustrated). Bill color is also the key for differentiation from the otherwise identical Nazca Booby. On juvenile, note white nuchal collar. Uncommon in offshore waters, casual visitor to coastal waters.

Nazca Booby *Sula granti*

34 in (86 cm). Virtually identical to Masked Booby, except for **yellow-orange bill** shading to orange-red at base. Juvenile lacks white nuchal collar of juvenile Masked Booby. Uncommon in Pacific waters, not likely to be seen from shore.

Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster*

27 in (69 cm). The **unmarked, dark-brown upperparts** and contrasting **white belly** facilitate identification; note that males on the Pacific side of CR have pale-gray heads (compare with juvenile Blue-footed Booby). Juvenile closely resembles juvenile Red-footed Booby (not illustrated), but has darker head. Common in offshore waters. Roosts and breeds on rocky islets; rarely comes close to shore.

Blue-footed Booby *Sula nebouxii*

32 in (81 cm). The adult's **blue feet** are diagnostic; also note **white on rump and upper back**. Juvenile has dark feet and resembles male Pacific race of Brown Booby, but note white on rump and upper back. Casual along Pacific coast and in Gulf of Nicoya.

Red-footed Booby *Sula sula*

28 in (71 cm). **Red feet** are distinctive in all adult morphs. Pacific dark morph has dark rump and tail, Caribbean dark morph (not illustrated) has white rump and tail; rare Pacific white morph (not illustrated) has black tail (compare with Masked Booby), Caribbean white morph has white tail. Juvenile (not illustrated) has greenish feet and is very similar to juvenile Brown Booby, but is more uniformly dull brown. Uncommon in offshore waters; generally not found close to shore, but a few dark morph birds are regularly sighted on rocky islets off the northern end of Corcovado NP.

HYDROBATIDAE. These small ocean-faring species pose serious identification difficulties, even for experienced observers. Some authorities suggest using flight style (e.g., tern-like, bat-like) to distinguish between species at sea, but that can be problematic, as wind conditions greatly affect the way birds fly. Instead, tail shape, pattern on the rump and wings, and relative size (when possible to observe) offer more concrete identification clues. Storm-petrels feed on small items (mostly planktonic crustaceans and small fish) taken from the water's surface. They typically fly swiftly and close to the surface.

Wilson's Storm-Petrel *Oceanites oceanicus*

7 in (18 cm). The combination of a square (or only slightly notched) tail and **feet that protrude beyond the tip of the tail in flight** separate this from other white-rumped species. Also note that white on rump extends down sides towards the vent. Uncommon (though occasionally numerous) in Pacific waters from April to Sept; also possible in Caribbean waters.

Leach's Storm-Petrel *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*

8 in (20 cm). Both white- and dark-rumped morphs occur in Pacific waters, so note **long, forked tail**. On white-rumped birds, white on rump does not extend down sides and often shows a narrow, dark median wash. Dark-rumped birds are similar to Black Storm-Petrel, but tail is less deeply forked and pale bar across the upperwing extends to leading edge of the wing. Occurs regularly in Pacific waters throughout the year; seen singly or in groups of up to fifty or more birds.

Band-rumped Storm-Petrel *Oceanodroma castro*

8 in (20 cm). Very similar to Wilson's Storm-Petrel, but feet do not extend beyond tip of tail in flight. Uncommon in Pacific waters year-round. Usually seen singly.

Wedge-rumped Storm-Petrel *Oceanodroma tethys*

7 in (18 cm). Shows the largest white rump patch of any of the white-rumped species, with **white uppertail coverts extending almost to the end of the notched tail**; white also extends down sides towards the vent. Recorded year-round in Pacific waters, though appears to be most likely from July to Nov. Most often seen singly, but also possible in small groups.

Black Storm-Petrel *Oceanodroma melania*

9 in (23 cm). Similar to dark-rumped Leach's Storm-Petrel, but note that the tail is more deeply forked, and the pale bar across the upperwing does not quite reach the leading edge of the wing. Present year-round in Pacific waters, sometimes in sizeable concentrations of fifty or more birds, though also seen singly.

Least Storm-Petrel *Oceanodroma microsoma*

6 in (15 cm). Its notably small size and **wedge-shaped tail** set it apart from other dark-rumped storm-petrels. Present throughout the year in Pacific waters; seen both singly and in small groups.

PROCELLARIIDAE. The largest family of seabirds and a fairly diverse group overall; however, members of only one genus are regular in CR waters. Still, ID within the genus *Puffinus* is challenging, and attention should be paid to soft part colors and underwing pattern. There is essentially no difference between the sexes, nor between adults and juveniles. Shearwaters often fly low over the water, sometimes skimming the surface with the tip of a wing (hence the name *shearwater*). They take fish from the surface or capture prey by underwater pursuit.

Pink-footed Shearwater *Puffinus creatopus*

19 in (48 cm). Very similar to pale morph Wedge-tailed Shearwater, but combination of pinkish bill (with dark tip) and feet is distinctive. Possible in Pacific waters throughout the year; usually seen singly.

Wedge-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus pacificus*

17 in (43 cm). The commonly seen pale morph is similar to Pink-footed Shearwater, but has a dark-gray bill; also similar to Galapagos Shearwater, but is much larger and has less clean-cut separation between dark upperparts and pale underparts. The dark morph is rare in CR waters and has mostly dark underwing (compare with Sooty Shearwater [p. 374]). Present year-round in Pacific waters and can be quite numerous, though more often encountered singly. Typically flies in a relaxed manner with a couple of flaps and a long glide. Tail looks long and somewhat pointed in flight.

Galapagos Shearwater *Puffinus subalaris*

12 in (30 cm). The smallest shearwater in CR; further set apart from other species by the more distinct separation of dark upperparts and pale underparts. Present year-round in Pacific waters, usually seen singly (off Caribbean coast see Audubon's Shearwater [p. 375]). Attracted to vessels; will often circle several times and follow for many minutes.

STERCORARIIDAE. Close relatives of gulls, the members of this family are almost completely pelagic away from their breeding grounds. Identification is complicated by the existence of pale, intermediate, and dark morphs of both adults and juveniles of most species. Sexes are similar. At sea, skuas and jaegers obtain most of their food by piracy—chasing and badgering other birds until they drop or disgorge their prey.

Pomarine Jaeger *Stercorarius pomarinus*

Breeding 26 in (66 cm); nonbreeding 20 in (51 cm). Round-tipped central tail feathers extending 3 to 6 in (8 to 15 cm) beyond rest of tail are diagnostic in breeding adult. In all other ages and plumages, note presence of a second pale patch on underwing, smaller and closer to the bend of the wing than large pale patch on primaries. The most commonly encountered jaeger in Pacific waters, also possible in Caribbean waters; from Aug to April. Usually seen well offshore and singly. Typically flies with relaxed, powerful strokes, about 16 ft (5 m) or more above the water's surface; readily approaches boats.

Parasitic Jaeger *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Breeding 22 in (56 cm); nonbreeding 17 in (43 cm). Pointed central tail feathers extending 3 to 5 in (8 to 12 cm) beyond rest of tail are distinctive in breeding adult (though see Long-tailed Jaeger [p. 377]). Also note lack of second pale patch on underwing (present on nonbreeding and juvenile Pomarines). Any juvenile bird with cinnamon-rufous tones to its plumage will be a Parasitic Jaeger. Uncommon in Pacific waters, possible in Caribbean waters; from Aug to April. Usually seen well offshore and singly, but is also the jaeger most likely to be seen near the coast. Flight is swift and falcon-like.

South Polar Skua *Stercorarius maccormicki*

21 in (53 cm). In all plumages, told apart from jaegers by very broad wings—with obvious white patch across base of primaries—and wedge-shaped tail. Casual on both coasts. A pale morph adult was photographed in Tortuguero (March 2001); older sight reports of skuas from both coasts, including Gulf of Nicoya, between April and Sept (coinciding with South American winter) are most likely of this species. However, any skua showing brownish coloration should be closely checked, as it would likely be one of the other three species of skua.

LARIDAE. Gulls and terns are uncommon along open beaches in CR; their greatest concentrations are found at river mouths, harbors, and the larger inlets. Gulls are stockier than terns and are more often seen sitting on the water; they are mainly scavengers and do not dive for food. Terns are graceful birds that dive for fish and rarely sit on water. Identification to species can be challenging in adult birds and extremely difficult in juveniles. Here we treat only the species most likely to be seen, but several additional species appear in the Rarities section (p. 372).

Laughing Gull *Leucophaeus atricilla*

16 in (41 cm). Very similar to Franklin's Gull and best told apart in flight, when adult shows **gray upperwing with black tip** and first-winter bird shows a **complete black tail band**. By far the most common gull in CR; juveniles are present year-round, accompanied by migrants from Sept to May. Opportunistically scavenges along tideline and around ports and fishing boats; rests on sandbars and on dikes that crisscross salt ponds and commercial shrimp ponds.

Franklin's Gull *Leucophaeus pipixcan*

14 in (36 cm). Very similar to Laughing Gull and best told apart in flight, when adult shows **black band on primaries bordered by white on both sides**, and first-winter bird has black tail band interrupted by **white outer tail feathers** (also note **white underparts**). Fairly common passage migrant on Pacific coast from Oct to Nov and from April to early June, rare winter resident. Casual on Caribbean coast. Scavenges less than Laughing Gull, often forages over fields, catching insects in flight.

Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis*

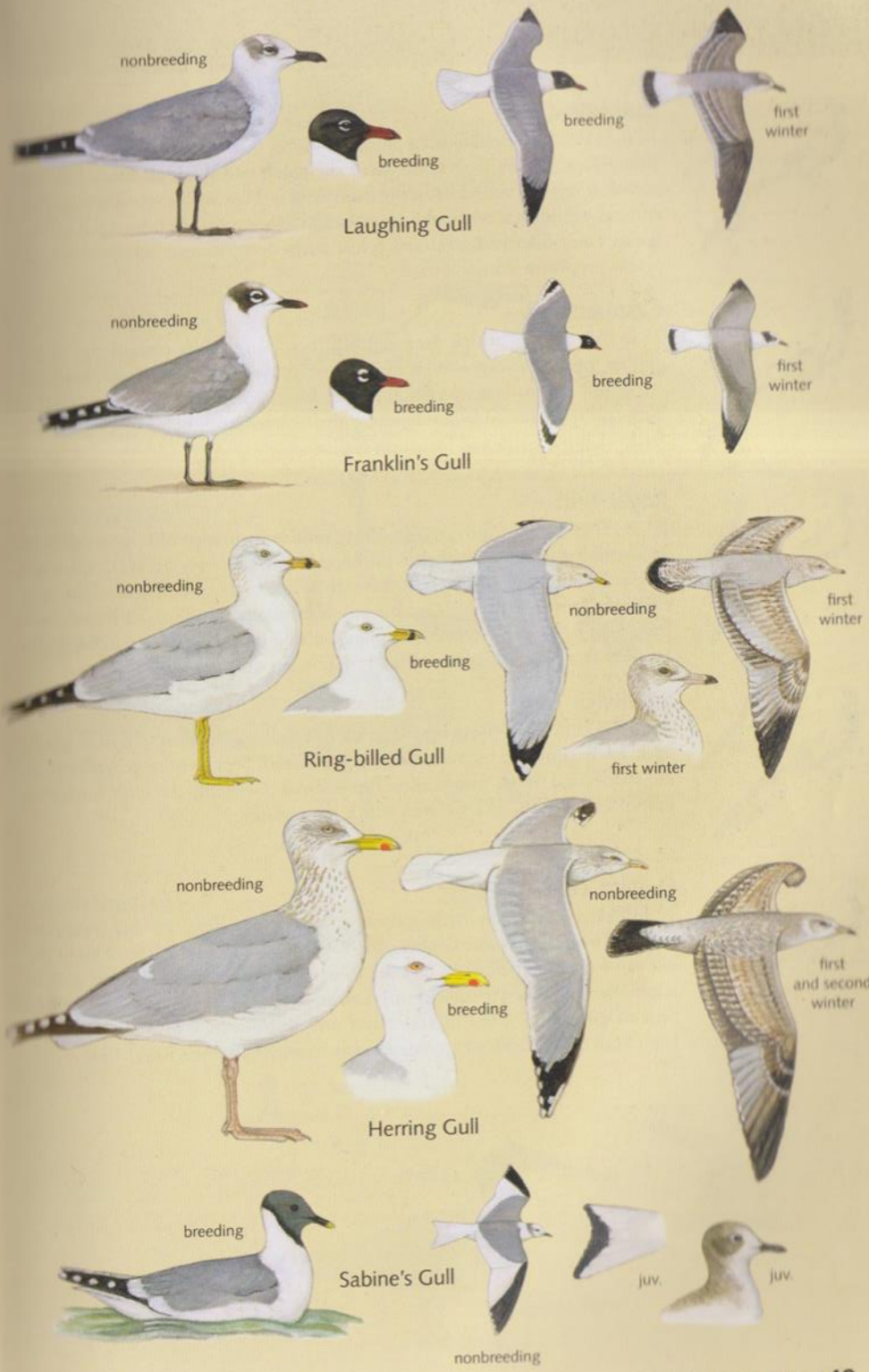
18 in (46 cm). Only slightly larger than Laughing Gull. First-winter bird has pink legs and pink bill with black tip; all older birds have yellow legs and yellow bill with distinctive black ring near the tip. Rare migrant on both coasts, from early Nov to late May. Most likely to occur at harbors or river mouths in association with Laughing Gulls and assorted terns.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

24 in (61 cm). A **very large** gull; one and a half times the size of Laughing Gull and three times as heavy. First- and second-winter birds are brownish with pink legs; basal half of bill pink, distal half black; in flight, show **pale inner primaries**. Adult has pink legs and yellow bill with red spot near tip of lower mandible. Rare migrant on both coasts from early Nov to mid-May. When present, typically found accompanying flocks of Laughing Gulls and assorted terns.

Sabine's Gull *Xema sabini*

13 in (33 cm). On adult, the boldly patterned, three-toned upperparts (white, black, and gray) are distinctive (gray replaced by brown in juvenile). Fairly common passage migrant in Pacific waters from Aug to Nov and from March to June; seldom seen from shore. Small size and graceful flight suggest a tern.



Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica*

16 in (41 cm). In nonbreeding plumage, whiter than any other CR tern (except White Tern [p. 368]); also note **dark ear patch** and **thick all-black bill**. Uncommon migrant on Pacific coast from Sept to May, with some juveniles present year-round; rare on Caribbean coast, though most likely from April to May. Forages over intertidal areas and fields; rarely dives, instead swoops down and plucks prey from water's surface.

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia*

21 in (53 cm). The **thick deep-red bill** (becoming **dusky toward tip**) distinguishes it from the very similar Royal Tern. In nonbreeding plumage, note dark streaks on crown. Uncommon year-round on Pacific coast, mostly in Gulf of Nicoya. Prefers intertidal areas, where one or a few birds may be mixed among flocks of Royal Terns and Laughing Gulls (p. 48).

Royal Tern *Thalasseus maximus*

20 in (51 cm). Has a fairly straight, stout, **uniformly orange bill** (more yellowish in juvenile) that is intermediate in thickness between the very similar Caspian and Elegant Terns. Nonbreeding birds have white forehead and midcrown. The most common tern in CR; juveniles present year-round, accompanied by migrants from Sept to June. Feeds offshore, plunge-diving for fish; rests on sandbars, also on dikes that crisscross salt ponds and commercial shrimp ponds.

Sandwich Tern *Thalasseus sandvicensis*

16 in (41 cm). The **yellow-tipped black bill** distinguishes this tern in all plumages. Fairly common migrant on both coasts from Sept to May; juveniles present year-round, more common on Pacific coast. Generally the most numerous tern in CR after Royal Tern, with which it associates.

Elegant Tern *Thalasseus elegans*

17 in (43 cm). Very similar to somewhat larger Royal Tern, but bill is proportionately longer and more slender, with slight drooping aspect. The color of the bill can vary from yellow in juvenile to orange or orange red in adult (bill of adult often has a lighter-colored tip). Uncommon migrant on Pacific coast from Sept to early June; a few juveniles also present from June to Aug. Casual on Caribbean coast. Tends to accompany much more numerous Royal Tern.

Bridled Tern — *Onychoprion anaethetus*

14 in (36 cm). Dark upperparts and pale underparts should preclude confusion. Similar Sooty Tern (p. 368) is mostly pelagic and extremely unlikely to be seen from shore; note **narrow white superciliary** and **pale nuchal collar** on Bridled Tern. Fairly common from March to Sept, when breeding on rocky islets off Pacific coast (rare in other months); casual on Caribbean coast. Snatches prey from ocean surface by swooping, not diving.

Least Tern — *Sternula antillarum*

9 in (23 cm). Notable for its small size and hurried wingbeats in flight. Uncommon in Gulf of Nicoya (where it can occur year-round), rare elsewhere on Pacific coast; casual on Caribbean coast. Favors sheltered waters.

Black Tern — *Chlidonias niger*

10 in (25 cm). Distinctive in breeding plumage; in other plumages, the **dark smudge on side** below shoulder is diagnostic. Fairly common migrant on both coasts from Sept to May; some juveniles present year-round, though more common on Pacific coast. Found both offshore and over lowland wetlands; plucks small prey from water's surface and also catches insects in flight.

Common Tern — *Sterna hirundo*

14 in (36 cm). The **tail's narrow, dark outer edge** is diagnostic, even on juvenile (with shorter, notched tail). Common passage migrant on both coasts from Sept to mid-Nov and from April to May; uncommon winter resident on both coasts; uncommon summer resident from June to Aug in Gulf of Nicoya. An agile tern of sheltered waters; infrequently forages offshore.

Forster's Tern — *Sterna forsteri*

14 in (36 cm). In breeding plumage, similar to Common Tern, but with **darkest portion of tail on inside of fork**; nonbreeding birds have dark ear patch like that of nonbreeding Gull-billed Tern (p. 50). Casual winter resident from Nov to March in Gulf of Nicoya. Often forages over freshwater, catching insects in flight.

Gulls, Terns, Skimmers

Brown Noddy *Anous stolidus*

16 in (41 cm). The **whitish cap** is distinctive. (See also Black Noddy [p. 368].) Uncommon on Pacific coast and rare on Caribbean coast; from April to Sept. Most likely seen around rocky offshore islets. Unlike most other terns, flies unswervingly and close to the ocean surface.

Black Skimmer *Rynchops niger*

18 in (46 cm). The **red-and-black bill with elongated lower mandible** is diagnostic. Fairly common migrant in Gulf of Nicoya, rare elsewhere along the Pacific coast; from Sept to May. Rare summer resident on the Pacific coast from June to Aug. From May to Oct, occasional birds from South America are present and can be told apart by their entirely dark tail feathers (not illustrated). Usually seen resting on sandbars with gulls and terns.

Oystercatchers

HAEMATOPODIDAE. The oystercatchers are a widespread and homogenous group of coastal waders, though a few species also occur farther inland. Their long, blade-like bills are specialized for feeding on various types of mollusks and are used both in dislodging the prey from rocky substrates and in extracting it from its shell.

American Oystercatcher *Haematopus palliatus*

17 in (43 cm). The **red-orange bill** and **entirely black head and neck** are diagnostic. Resident birds (found on Pacific coast only) are uncommon. Migrants are uncommon on Pacific coast and rare on Caribbean coast, from Aug to May. Pairs forage on rocky points and along open beaches, both in intertidal zones and in shallow water. Emits a loud, piping whistle.

Sunbittern

EURYPYGIDAE. The sole member of its family, the Sunbittern is found only in the Neotropics. It occurs principally along rushing, boulder-strewn mountain streams, but can also be found in lowlands along slow-flowing rivers and in swamp forest. It feeds on invertebrates and small vertebrates. Its cryptic coloration and slow movements while foraging can make it difficult to spot.

Sunbittern *Eurypyga helias*

18 in (46 cm). The **long bill** and the shape of the body suggest a heron, but the **striped head pattern** eliminates any confusion. The spectacular sunburst pattern on the upper surface of the open wings is also diagnostic. Uncommon in wet lowlands and foothills of Caribbean and southern Pacific (north to about Quepos); rare along streams on Pacific slope of the Guanacaste, Tilarán, and Central Cordilleras; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Emits a far-carrying, forlorn, rising whistle lasting about one second.

ARDEIDAE. These long-legged and long-necked birds are almost always found in wetland habitats. Apart from the odd-looking Boat-billed Heron (sometimes placed in its own monotypic family), all have long, pointed bills for spearing or snatching prey. Bill and leg color are important in differentiating among the similar-looking white herons and egrets.

Rufescent Tiger-Heron *Tigrisoma lineatum*

27 in (69 cm). **Deep rufous head and neck** of adult are diagnostic. Juvenile is virtually indistinguishable from juvenile Fasciated Tiger-Heron, but there is little range overlap. Rare in Caribbean lowlands; occasionally to 1,600 ft (500 m). Often remains motionless; moves slowly when foraging. Inhabits edges of quiet streams or swamps within mature wet forest.

Bare-throated Tiger-Heron *Tigrisoma mexicanum*

30 in (76 cm). **Bare yellow skin on throat** distinguishes both adult and juvenile from other tiger-herons; on adult, also note dark crown, gray cheeks, and rufous flanks. Fairly common in lowlands; rarely above 1,600 ft (500 m). Found in open habitats more often than other tiger-herons; occurs in a variety of wetland environments, including mangroves, marshes, and even roadside ditches. Utters a rolling, gravelly *wowrrh*.

Fasciated Tiger-Heron *Tigrisoma fasciatum*

25 in (64 cm). Adult is similar to adult Bare-throated Tiger-Heron, but has **fine barring on cheeks and crown**; also note that the white throat feathers extend to base of bill. Juvenile is virtually identical to juvenile Rufescent Tiger-Heron, but there is little range overlap. Uncommon in Caribbean foothills, as far north as the Miravalles Volcano; from 300 to 3,000 ft (100 to 900 m). Rare in Pacific foothills between Quepos and Uvita, and in interior of the Osa Peninsula. Forages along rocky, fast-flowing streams in forested areas.

Pinnated Bittern *Botaurus pinnatus*

26 in (66 cm). Similar to juvenile tiger-herons, but has **fine barring on back of neck, streaking on throat and breast**, and **pale, sandy brown** coloration overall. In flight, shows dark-gray flight feathers. Uncommon in lowlands; to 2,000 ft (600 m). Camouflages well in tall grass of wet fields and in marsh vegetation.

American Bittern *Botaurus lentiginosus*

28 in (71 cm). Distinguished from Pinnated Bittern by black malar stripe and unbarred back of neck; juvenile night-herons (p. 62) are stockier and have stouter bills. After going unreported in CR for nearly a century, there were two separate, unconfirmed sight reports in central Pacific marshes (Nov 2003 and Jan 2004), and a bird was photographed at Medio Queso (April 2012). At best, a casual migrant.

Reddish Egret *Egretta rufescens*

30 in (76 cm). Adult dark morph similar to adult Little Blue Heron (p. 60) and adult pale morph similar to other white herons; however, both adult morphs show **two-toned bill** with **pinkish base** and **black tip**. Juvenile dark morph is fairly uniformly dull gray, with dark bill and **pale iris**. Juvenile pale morph (not illustrated) combines all-dark bill with all-dark legs and feet. Rare migrant in coastal lowlands, from Nov to April. Feeds actively in brackish water.

Least Bittern *Ixobrychus exilis*

12 in (30 cm). Contrasting black-and-cinnamon pattern of male is diagnostic; female and juvenile are browner and duller, but still show distinctive **buffy wing patch** (especially noticeable in flight). Uncommon in lowlands; to 2,000 ft (600 m). Difficult to see since it skulks in dense vegetation of freshwater marshes.

Striated Heron *Butorides striata*

18 in (46 cm). Very similar to Green Heron, but sides of head and neck are gray or buffy. Casual; known from a 1923 specimen taken near Cañas; two fairly recent sightings at Palo Verde NP (sighted Oct 2003 and photographed Feb 2004); and single birds photographed at Caño Negro (March 2005) and Esterillos (March 2008). Behavior like that of Green Heron.

Green Heron *Butorides virescens*

18 in (46 cm). Doesn't look very green, but small size, dark coloration, and **yellow-orange legs** (deep orange in breeding male) should aid in identification. Common and widespread; to 5,900 ft (1,800 m). Resident population joined by migrants from Sept to April. Found near almost any body of water; often hunts from low perch along the shoreline.

Tricolored Heron *Egretta tricolor*

26 in (66 cm). Somewhat resembles adult Little Blue Heron (p. 60), but has **white belly**; also has longer, more slender bill. Juvenile somewhat resembles juvenile Agami Heron (p. 62), but neck is more reddish brown. Fairly common and widespread migrant, mostly from Sept to May, but some individuals present year-round; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Found in almost any open wetland habitat.

Little Blue Heron — *Egretta caerulea*

24 in (61 cm). Distinguished in all plumages by **two-toned bill** with **light blue-gray base** and **dark tip**; also note **dull-greenish legs**. Adult resembles dark morph Reddish Egret (p. 58) and somewhat resembles Tricolored Heron (p. 58). Upon arrival in CR, juvenile is entirely white. Many of these birds spend their first summer in CR and show dark-gray splotches as they gradually molt into adult plumage. Common and widespread migrant, from Sept to April; uncommon summer resident, from April to Sept; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Found in almost any open wetland habitat, and along wooded streams.

Great Egret — *Ardea alba*

39 in (99 cm). Largest of the white herons in CR, with **very long neck** (often held bent in an S), **yellow-orange bill**, and **black legs**. Common and widespread; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Resident population joined by migrants from Sept to April. Found in almost any open wetland habitat.

Great Blue Heron — *Ardea herodias*

46 in (117 cm). **Large size** and **gray coloration** should preclude confusion. A fairly common and widespread migrant, mostly from Sept to May, but some individuals present year-round; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Found in almost any open wetland habitat.

Cattle Egret — *Bubulcus ibis*

20 in (51 cm). Distinguished from other white herons by **yellow-orange bill** (the Great Egret, which also has a yellow-orange bill, is twice the size and has a much longer neck). In breeding plumage, birds have an orangish cast to crown, breast, and back. Since arriving in CR in 1954, has become common and widespread; to at least 7,200 ft (2,200 m). Found in open wetland habitats as well as in pastures, where it follows cattle and horses, grabbing the insects that those animals stir up.

Snowy Egret — *Egretta thula*

24 in (61 cm). Told apart from other white herons by **slender black bill**; also note black legs with **yellow feet** (juvenile has yellow-green on back of legs). Common and widespread; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Resident population joined by migrants from Sept to April. Found in almost any open wetland habitat, and along wooded streams.

Agami Heron *Agamia agami*

29 in (74 cm). Dark, rich coloration and **very long bill** are diagnostic. Juvenile (not illustrated) is dull brown above, with slaty crown and white throat; resembles juvenile Tricolored Heron (p. 58), but neck is less reddish brown. Rare in Caribbean lowlands and coastal areas surrounding Golfo Dulce and the Osa Peninsula; has also been reported occasionally from Lomas de Barbudal, and there is one report from the Tárcoles mangroves (Jan 2007). Quietly stalks in shallow streams or swamps within mature forest.

Black-crowned Night-Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

25 in (64 cm). Adult somewhat like Boat-billed Heron in coloration, but is **white below**; also note much narrower bill. Juvenile is very similar to juvenile Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, but note larger white spots on wing coverts and that **most of lower mandible is yellowish**. Fairly common in lowlands around Gulf of Nicoya, rare in Caribbean lowlands and Central Valley; to 3,300 ft (1,000 m). Roosts by day in dense vegetation near water.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron *Nyctanassa violacea*

24 in (61 cm). Adult's head pattern is distinctive. Juvenile can be told apart from juvenile Black-crowned Night-Heron by smaller spots on wing coverts and **all-dark bill**. Fairly common and widespread in lowlands; resident population joined by migrants from Oct to April. Roosts during the day in trees near water, especially mangroves, but often seen standing on mudflats and river banks in daylight.

Boat-billed Heron *Cochlearius cochlearius*

20 in (51 cm). The strange-looking **broad bill** is the definitive field mark. Somewhat like adult Black-crowned Night-Heron, but is darker below. Fairly common and widespread in lowlands; to 2,000 ft (600 m). Colonies nest and roost by day in vegetation that overhangs ponds and streams. If bothered, makes a deep, throaty cackling *ka, ka, ka, cuaho, cuaho, cuah, cuah* and also loud beak-snapping noises.

THRESKIORNITHIDAE. Large wading birds with long, distinctive bills—decurved in the ibises and flattened in the spoonbills. All fly with the neck and legs extended.

White Ibis *Eudocimus albus*

25 in (64 cm). The **red bill and legs** set adult apart from white-colored herons and egrets. In flight, note **black wing tips**. Juvenile has mostly brownish upperparts, but the curved pinkish bill identifies it as an ibis (Whimbrel [p. 74] has striped head); also note white rump, belly, and underwing. Common in Caño Negro region and around Gulf of Nicoya, uncommon elsewhere in lowlands and in western Central Valley; to 3,000 ft (900 m). Probes in moist substrate of marshes and mudflats, also along streams; usually in small groups.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*

23 in (58 cm). In poor light, could be confused with Green Ibis, but always appears slimmer than that species. In good light, there should be no confusion. Uncommon in wetlands of Palo Verde NP and Caño Negro regions. Small groups forage in freshwater marshes.

Green Ibis *Mesembrinibis cayennensis*

21 in (53 cm). A **stocky**, dark ibis, which in good light shows bronzy green hues (compare with Glossy Ibis); feathers on back of head and nape often appear ruffled, giving it a slightly crested look. When perched high in trees, can give the impression of a Black Vulture (p. 90)—until the bill is seen! Uncommon in Caribbean lowlands; occasionally to 2,300 ft (700 m). Prefers forested areas, where individuals or pairs forage in swamps and along streams; also found at edge of more open marsh habitat, as in Caño Negro. At dawn and dusk, gives a hollow, rolling *krwa-krwa-krwa-krwa*.

Roseate Spoonbill *Platalea ajaja*

32 in (81 cm). No other CR bird is **pink**; juvenile is much paler, but note unique bill shape. Fairly common in Caño Negro region and around Gulf of Nicoya, uncommon elsewhere in lowlands and in western Central Valley; to 3,000 ft (900 m). Individuals and groups forage in shallow water of open wetland habitats.

Limpkin

ARAMIDAE. The lone member of this family is considered a relative of cranes as well as rails and crakes (p. 84). It inhabits freshwater marshes and swamps in the New World tropics and subtropics, where it feeds primarily on apple snails. The common name alludes to the bird's awkward way of walking.

Limpkin *Aramus guarauna*

26 in (66 cm). Could bring to mind a juvenile ibis (p. 64), but its bill is less curved and its face is fully feathered. Fairly common only in Palo Verde NP and Caño Negro regions; uncommon elsewhere in suitable habitat, including the Central Valley; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Forages in freshwater marshes and perches on low limbs. Gives a loud, wailing *krrAAOOoow.*

Thick-knees

BURHINIDAE. Terrestrial birds of arid, open habitats, thick-knees somewhat resemble long-legged plovers (p. 68). They remain mostly motionless throughout the day, camouflaged by their brown-and-gray streaked plumage. Their large eyes correspond to their crepuscular and nocturnal foraging habits.

Double-striped Thick-knee *Burhinus bistriatus*

19 in (48 cm). The combination of a **broad white superciliary** (bordered above by a blackish stripe) and a **short, stout bill** sets it apart from any of the shorebirds. In flight, shows a Willet-like wing pattern (see p. 74). Fairly common in northern Pacific lowlands; uncommon in western Central Valley; occasionally reported from central Pacific lowlands and northern central Caribbean lowlands, where status is uncertain; to 2,600 ft (800 m). Easily overlooked in daytime, when it stands or sits in pastures and cleared fields. Active and vocal at night, uttering a raucous, lengthy *pip-prri-pippridipip-pip-pippridipip…*

Storks

CICONIIDAE. Large wading birds with long legs and long, impressive bills. The head and neck are featherless on both CR species. They often soar on thermal currents during the heat of the day.

Jabiru *Jabiru mycteria*

52 in (132 cm). Told apart from the much smaller Wood Stork by its **massive, slightly upturned bill**. In flight, shows **entirely white wings**. Juvenile is splotched gray-brown and white. Uncommon in Palo Verde NP and Caño Negro regions. Forages in open freshwater marshes.

Wood Stork *Mycteria americana*

40 in (102 cm). The **heavy, slightly decurved bill** differentiates it from the Jabiru and other white wading birds. In flight, the black flight feathers are diagnostic (King Vulture [p. 92] has similar black-and-white pattern, but short neck and legs). Common in Caño Negro region and around Gulf of Nicoya, uncommon elsewhere in lowlands and in western Central Valley; to 3,000 ft (900 m). Found in almost any open wetland habitat.

CHARADRIIDAE. Most plovers resemble sandpipers (p. 72) in size, coloration, and habitat preference, but are characterized by large eyes and relatively short, stubby bills. Plovers pluck their prey from the ground surface, rather than probing in wet substrate as sandpipers do. They often stand motionless and attentive, then run down prey with a short burst of speed. The lapwing group, which contains larger, more boldly patterned species, is represented in CR by the Southern Lapwing.

Southern Lapwing *Vanellus chilensis*

14 in (36 cm). The pied facial pattern, black breast, and otherwise white underparts render it virtually unmistakable. First recorded in CR in 1997, this South American species has become established in lowlands of both Caribbean and Pacific slopes; to 2,600 ft (800 m). Uncommon, but still spreading on both slopes. Pairs or family groups favor open grassy areas near water, including rivers, natural ponds, fish ponds, and wastewater treatment plants. Aggressive in behavior and quite vocal; repeats a loud, agitated *KEEEAH, KEEAH, KEEAH…*; several individuals often join in.

Black-bellied Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

11 in (28 cm). The **black axillars**, visible in flight, are the definitive field mark in all plumages; on flying birds, also note **white wing stripe, rump, and tail base**. Standing birds in nonbreeding plumage can be recognized by their overall gray color, short bill, and large eye. (Compare with American Golden-Plover.) Common migrant on Pacific coast and uncommon on Caribbean coast, from Aug to May; some juveniles are summer residents. Birds in breeding plumage occasionally seen in Aug and May. Mostly seen on tidal flats of rivers, but also on beaches and in mangroves; occasionally farther inland during migration. Whistles a melancholy *plee-uu-reee*, the middle note lower pitched.

American Golden-Plover *Pluvialis dominica*

10 in (25 cm). Resembles Black-bellied Plover, but in flight shows **gray axillars** and **gray stripe on upperwing**, and lacks white on rump and tail base. Standing birds in nonbreeding plumage show a slightly more well-defined supercilliary than do Black-bellied Plovers, but should be seen in flight to make positive identification. Breeding birds similar in pattern to breeding Black-bellied Plover, but have entirely black underparts. Rare migrant, from mid-Aug to May, and rare summer resident; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m) in Central Valley. Birds in breeding plumage occasionally seen in Aug and May. Prefers wet grassy fields, but also can occur on tidal flats. Gives a shrill *queet*.

Collared Plover *Charadrius collaris*

6 in (15 cm). Told apart from Wilson's Plover by **short, slender bill**, and from Semipalmated Plover by **all-black bill**, pinkish legs, and lack of nuchal collar. Uncommon on both coasts. Individuals or pairs forage amid the flotsam above the high-tide line on beaches; they also forage on river tidal flats and gravel bars.

Snowy Plover *Charadrius nivosus*

6 in (15 cm). Very pale; the only small plover in CR with **dark-gray legs** and **incomplete breast band**. Rare passage migrant, possible on both coasts from Sept to Nov and from March to April. Individuals or pairs forage with other small plovers amid the flotsam above the high-tide line on beaches; they also forage on river tidal flats and gravel bars.

Wilson's Plover *Charadrius wilsonia*

8 in (20 cm). The **thick bill** sets it apart from the similarly patterned Collared Plover. Pinkish legs and an all-black bill distinguish it from Semipalmated Plover. Common on Pacific coast and uncommon on Caribbean coast; resident population is joined by migrants from Sept to May. Forages with other small plovers on river tidal flats and gravel bars, and also amid the flotsam above the high-tide line on beaches.

Semipalmated Plover *Charadrius semipalmatus*

7 in (18 cm). The **orange legs** and **orange base of short, black-tipped bill** distinguish it from Collared Plover and Wilson's Plover, which both have pinkish legs and all-black bills. Common winter resident on Pacific coast and uncommon on Caribbean coast; from early Aug to early May. Passage migrants can occur inland (e.g., Caño Negro and Central Valley) from early Aug to Nov and from late March to early May. An uncommon summer resident, mostly around Gulf of Nicoya. Forages with other plovers and sandpipers on river tidal flats and gravel bars, and also on wave-lapped sections of beaches.

Killdeer *Charadrius vociferus*

10 in (25 cm). Distinctively marked with **two breast bands**; in flight, shows **tawny rump**. Fairly common migrant from late Aug to May; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m) in Central Valley, where a resident population also exists. Favors grassy or plowed fields; also found around marshy ponds. Readily gives its characteristic *kill-deer* call.

Stilts, Avocets

RECURVIROSTRIDAE. The avocets and stilts form an attractive group of waders with boldly contrasting black-and-white plumage, long legs, and long bills (avocets have bills with notably upturned tips). They typically inhabit wetlands with shallow, open water, where they forage for aquatic invertebrates either by direct strikes or by sweeping with their long bills.

American Avocet *Recurvirostra americana*

18 in (46 cm). The **slender, upturned bill**, together with black-and-white pattern on wings and back, is diagnostic. A casual migrant; originally known from four old records from the Palo Verde NP region (from Dec to May); more recently sighted on the Tortuguero canals (Jan 2002) and Lake Arenal (Feb 2003), and photographed at Chomes and nearby Punta Morales (Nov 2011). Forages in marshes and salt ponds.

Black-necked Stilt *Himantopus mexicanus*

15 in (38 cm). The combination of **extremely long red legs** and needle-like black bill is diagnostic. Resident birds are common around Gulf of Nicoya; migrants are likewise common in this area and are fairly common elsewhere in lowlands and in Central Valley (to 4,900 ft [1,500 m]), from Oct to May. Inhabits marshes, tidal flats, and ponds (including salt ponds); gregarious and often in groups of a dozen or more. These easily excited birds produce long series of sharp *kek* notes.

Sandpipers, Allies

SCOLOPACIDAE. This cosmopolitan family forms part of the group known as *waders* or *shorebirds*, though not all of its species inhabit coastal areas. All of the species found in CR are migrants that nest at higher latitudes. During most of their stay in CR, they are clad in nonbreeding plumage—making identification a challenge—but their relatively colorful and/or contrasting breeding plumage can sometimes be seen around the time of their fall arrival and spring departure. Bill shape and length, as well as length and color of legs, are often important identifying characteristics.

Marbled Godwit *Limosa fedoa*

18 in (46 cm). The **long, upturned bill** sets it apart from all other CR shorebirds, except for the accidental Hudsonian Godwit (p. 376) and the casual American Avocet (none of the three share similar plumage). Uncommon passage migrant from Aug to Sept and from March to April, uncommon winter resident from Aug to April, and rare summer resident. Occurs along Pacific coast; the single Caribbean record is from Tortuguero (Sept 2005). Favors mudflats and salt ponds; often with Whimbrels and Willets (p. 74). In flight, gives a hoarse *kaWHEK*.

Long-billed Curlew *Numenius americanus*

23 in (58 cm). Best told apart from Whimbrel by **lack of crown stripes**; body is buffy and, in flight, shows **cinnamon underwing**. Rare migrant from mid-Nov to mid-April; reported only from Gulf of Nicoya. Usually in association with Whimbrels, in which case its larger size is quite evident.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

17 in (43 cm). **Long bill, decurved toward tip**, sets it apart from all other CR shorebirds except Long-billed Curlew and juvenile White Ibis (p. 64), neither of which has a **striped crown**. Migrants are common on Pacific coast and uncommon on Caribbean coast, from Aug to May; fairly common summer resident on Pacific coast. Mostly found in brackish wetlands (e.g., mudflats and mangroves), less commonly along seashore; often with Willets. In flight, whistles a loud series of even-pitched *kyew* notes.

Willet *Tringa semipalmata*

15 in (38 cm). Very drab in nonbreeding plumage, but note **gray legs** and straight, stout bill; easily identified in flight by **bold black-and-white wing pattern**. Migrants are common on Pacific coast and uncommon on Caribbean coast, from Aug to May; uncommon summer resident on Pacific coast. Mostly found in brackish wetlands (e.g., mudflats and mangroves), less commonly along seashore; often with Whimbrels. In flight, gives a loud *klee-klee-klee*.

Solitary Sandpiper *Tringa solitaria*

8 in (20 cm). Resembles the Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, but has **olive legs** and obvious **white eye ring**. In flight, note **dark wings, rump, and central tail feathers**. Common migrant from Aug to May; to 6,600 ft (2,000 m). Wades in shallow freshwater, constantly nodding its head.

Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca*

14 in (36 cm). In all plumages, **bright-yellow legs** distinguish it from all but Lesser Yellowlegs. Differentiated from Lesser Yellowlegs by a **bill that is longer than the head**; also note **gray base of bill**. Uncommon migrant from Aug to May, rare summer resident; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Wades in a variety of wetland habitats (e.g., salt ponds, puddles, and freshwater marshes). Chimes three or four emphatic, slightly descending *tew* notes (similar to call of Lesser Yellowlegs).

Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes*

11 in (28 cm). Similar to Greater Yellowlegs, but **all-black bill is about equal in length to head**. Common migrant from Aug to May, uncommon summer resident; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Wades in a variety of wetland habitats (e.g., salt ponds, puddles, and freshwater marshes). Whistles one or two soft *tew* notes (similar to call of Greater Yellowlegs).

Upland Sandpiper *Bartramia longicauda*

12 in (30 cm). Somewhat resembles a small Whimbrel (p. 74), but has **short, straight bill** and **yellow legs**; also note large eye. Passage migrants uncommon in Pacific lowlands and Central Valley, rare on Caribbean slope; from late Aug to Nov and from mid-March to late May. Favors fields with short grass; has upright posture and holds wings raised for a moment on landing.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper *Calidris subruficollis*

8 in (20 cm). In shape, pattern, and habits, resembles the larger Upland Sandpiper, but has **unstreaked, buffy throat and breast**. Rare passage migrant in increasingly urbanized Central Valley, from late Aug to early Nov; the first reports from Pacific lowlands were from a plowed field near Chomes (Sept 2009) and a sod grass plantation northwest of Cañas (Nov 2011). Favors wet fields. Rather tame, but when flushed, flies rapidly and erratically.

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius*

8 in (20 cm). Spotted underparts readily identify birds in breeding plumage. In drab nonbreeding plumage, note **brown smudge on side of breast**. In flight, distinguished from Wandering Tattler by narrow but conspicuous **white wing stripe** and some white on sides of rump and tail. Common and widespread migrant from early Aug to mid-May, rare summer resident; to 7,200 ft (2,200 m). Found in any wetland habitat, from seashore to highland streams, usually singly. Teeters body and tail constantly; flies low with shallow, stiff wingbeats and short glides.

Wandering Tattler *Tringa incana*

11 in (28 cm). In nonbreeding plumage, looks like a large, gray version of the nonebreeding Spotted Sandpiper, but has **yellowish legs** and, in flight, shows **unmarked gray wings, rump, and tail**. Uncommon migrant from late Sept to late April, rare summer resident. Occurs along Pacific coast. Individual birds forage along rocky coastline, constantly teetering tail up and down.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

9 in (23 cm). In all plumages, the **dark breast pattern** and **bright-orange legs** set it apart; also note pointed, wedge-shaped bill. Shows pied pattern in flight. Compare with similar-sized Surfbird. Migrants are common on Pacific coast and uncommon on Caribbean coast, from Aug to late May; uncommon summer resident on both coasts. Individuals or groups forage on mud and sand exposed by the receding tide. In flight, gives a cackling rattle.

Surfbird *Calidris virgata*

10 in (25 cm). Size and shape similar to Ruddy Turnstone, but has **yellowish legs and orange base of short, stout bill**. In flight, shows white wing stripe, white rump, and **black subterminal tail band**. Uncommon passage migrant on Pacific coast from mid-Sept to late Oct and from late April to May; rare winter resident, from Sept to May. Individuals or small groups favor rocky coastline.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

8 in (20 cm). In nonbreeding plumage, this is **the palest sandpiper**, with strongly contrasting black bill, eyes, and legs. Rufous head and breast are distinctive in breeding plumage. In both plumages, birds in flight show bold white wing stripe. Fairly common migrant from mid-Aug to early May, rare summer resident; occurs along both coasts. The "classic" sandpiper that runs rapidly back and forth at the water's edge along sandy beaches; also found on mudflats and around salt ponds.

Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla*

6 in (15 cm). Very similar to Western Sandpiper and especially difficult to distinguish in nonbreeding plumage, but note that bill is generally shorter and straighter than on Western. In breeding plumage, further distinguished by lack of rufous on scapulars, crown, and ear coverts. Distinguished from Least Sandpiper by black legs. Fairly common migrant from mid-Aug to early May, rare summer resident; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Forages more by picking prey from ground surface than by probing in substrate; found mostly on mudflats and sandbars near river mouths, but also inland at edges of freshwater pools. In flight, gives a short, harsh *cherk*.

Western Sandpiper *Calidris mauri*

6 in (15 cm). Very similar to Semipalmated Sandpiper and especially difficult to distinguish in nonbreeding plumage, but note that bill is generally longer and more drooping than on Semipalmated. In breeding plumage, further distinguished by rufous on scapulars, crown, and ear coverts. Distinguished from Least Sandpiper by black legs. Migrants abundant on Pacific coast and fairly common elsewhere, from early Aug to early May; uncommon summer resident; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Typically forages by rapidly probing in substrate; mostly on mudflats and sandbars near river mouths, but also inland at edges of freshwater pools. In flight, gives a high, thin *cheet*.

Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla*

6 in (15 cm). Leg color and plumage pattern recall the significantly larger Pectoral Sandpiper; differentiated from similar-sized Semipalmated and Western Sandpipers by **yellowish legs**. Common migrant from early Aug to early May, rare summer resident; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Small, loose groups forage near water's edge in both saltwater and freshwater habitats. In flight, trills a high, rising *trreeep*.

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*

9 in (23 cm). Distinguished in all plumages by **yellowish legs** and a **streaked breast that is clearly delineated from the white belly** (compare with smaller Least Sandpiper); also note pale base of bill. Fairly common passage migrant from early Aug to late Nov and from early April to late May, rare winter and summer resident; to 5,200 ft (1,600 m). Mostly found in wet fields, much less commonly on mudflats and sandbars of lowland rivers. When flushed, flies low in rapid zigzag pattern. In flight, trills a harsh *trrrt*.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

8 in (20 cm). In breeding plumage, has diagnostic black belly patch. Nonbreeding plumage is very drab gray with brownish tinges on head and breast. In all plumages, note **sturdy bill that droops at tip** and, in flight, dark center of rump and tail. Rare migrant known only from the Gulf of Nicoya, from mid-Nov to early May. Probes rapidly on mudflats and around salt ponds. In flight, gives a harsh *krreet*.

Stilt Sandpiper *Calidris himantopus*

9 in (23 cm). In breeding plumage, heavily barred underparts and rufous cheeks are distinctive. In drab gray nonbreeding plumage, note fairly long bill and **long, greenish legs** (the two dowitchers [p. 82] have longer bills and shorter legs). In flight, shows white rump and plain, dark wings. Migrants are uncommon around Gulf of Nicoya and rare elsewhere on Pacific coast, from mid-Aug to late May. Wades and probes like a dowitcher in both saltwater and freshwater ponds. In flight, trills a soft, hoarse *trrrerp*.

White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis*

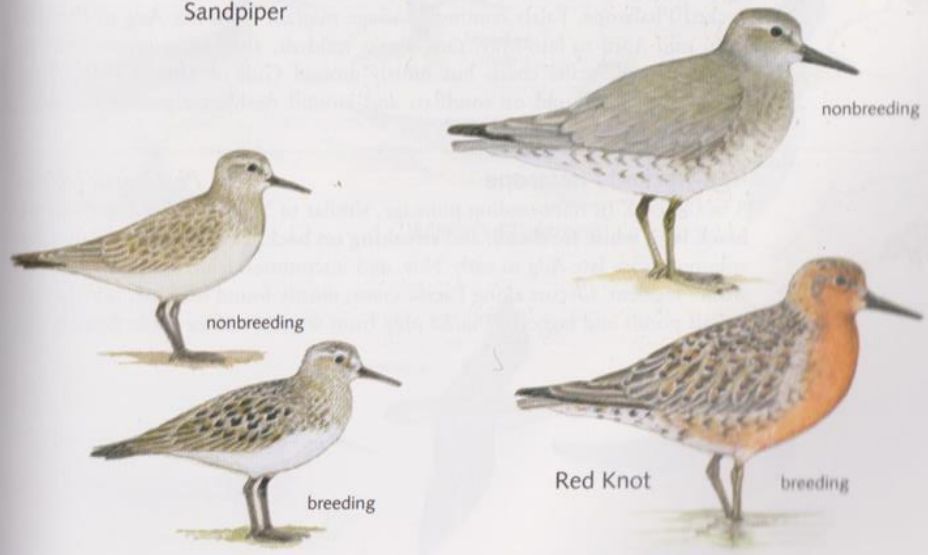
7 in (18 cm). In flight, the **white uppertail coverts** are diagnostic (though otherwise distinct Curlew Sandpiper [p. 377] also has white uppertail coverts). On standing birds, note that wing tips extend beyond tip of tail; bill slightly decurved, with **reddish-brown base of lower mandible**. Rare passage migrant from early Sept to mid-Oct and from early April to late May; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Forages near water's edge in both saltwater and freshwater habitats. In flight, gives a high, mousy squeak: *tseek-tseek*.

Baird's Sandpiper *Calidris bairdii*

8 in (20 cm). In flight, distinguished from very similar White-rumped Sandpiper by **dark center of rump and tail**; also note **slender, straight, black bill** and buffy, faintly streaked breast. Uncommon passage migrant on Pacific coast and in Central Valley, from late Aug to early Nov and from early April to early June; has also been seen on Irazú Volcano and Cerro de la Muerte, as high as 11,200 ft (3,400 m). Favors wet grassy areas near water, but also found on mudflats with other sandpipers; rarely wades. In flight, trills a rough *krreeet*.

Red Knot *Calidris canutus*

10 in (25 cm). In all plumages, somewhat resembles the two dowitchers (p. 82), but note **short (about as long as the head), stout, straight bill** and **plump aspect**. In flight, shows **pale-gray rump and tail**. Migrants are uncommon in Gulf of Nicoya and rare elsewhere along Pacific coast, from late Aug to late April. Forages on mudflats, moving slowly; rests in salt ponds.



Short-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus griseus*

11 in (28 cm). Readily told apart from other shorebirds by **long, straight bill** and **pale superciliary**, but essentially identical to Long-billed Dowitcher, from which it is best differentiated by **evenly barred tail** (i.e., black and white bars of equal width). In flight, both species show white rump and lower back. Migrants are common on Pacific coast and uncommon elsewhere, from early Aug to late May; uncommon summer resident; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Probes deeply in shallow saltwater; in migration, can also occur in freshwater habitats. In flight, gives a clear, rapid *tu,tu,tu*.

Long-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus scolopaceus*

11 in (28 cm). Essentially identical to Short-billed Dowitcher. Indeed, bill is not noticeably longer than Short-billed Dowitcher's; best distinguished by **black tail with narrow white barring**. In flight, both species show white rump and lower back. Rare migrant from late Oct to late April; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Favors wet fields and freshwater ponds. In flight, gives a sharp *keek*, singly or in repetition.

Wilson's Snipe *Gallinago delicata*

10 in (25 cm). Readily identified by **very long, straight bill** and **striped head and back**. Uncommon migrant in lowlands and in Central Valley (to 4,900 ft [1,500 m]), from early Oct to late April; passage migrants can occur as high as 9,800 ft (3,000 m). Individuals or pairs forage in wet fields; flight is swift and erratic.

Wilson's Phalarope *Phalaropus tricolor*

9 in (23 cm). In nonbreeding plumage, could recall a Stilt Sandpiper (p. 80) or yellowlegs (p. 74), but note **very thin bill** and **white underparts**; also see Red-necked Phalarope. Fairly common passage migrant from late Aug to Oct and from mid-April to late May, rare winter resident, also rare summer resident. Occurs along Pacific coast, but mostly around Gulf of Nicoya. Prefers salt ponds, but also found on mudflats and around freshwater pools; sometimes swims and spins on surface.

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*

8 in (20 cm). In nonbreeding plumage, similar to Wilson's Phalarope, but has **black legs, white forehead**, and **streaking on back**. Passage migrants are fairly common from late Aug to early Nov, and uncommon from April to May; rare winter resident. Occurs along Pacific coast; mostly found offshore, but also visits salt ponds and lagoons. Plucks prey from water's surface while floating and spinning.

Jacanas

JACANIDAE. This small pantropical family is characterized by extremely long toes that distribute the bird's weight, thus allowing it to walk over floating vegetation. Except for one monogamous African species, female jacanas are polyandrous, courting two or more males whenever possible. Male mates of polyandrous females tend to nesting duties and rearing of the precocial chicks. These birds are relatively weak fliers and momentarily hold their wings vertically outstretched on landing.

Northern Jacana *Jacana spinosa*

9 in (23 cm). Although this bird could recall a Common Gallinule or Purple Gallinule (p. 86), the **yellow-green flight feathers** and **yellow frontal shield** are diagnostic. Juvenile has very different plumage and is often mistaken for some type of shorebird, but the remarkably **long toes** and yellowish flight feathers set it apart; compare with juvenile Wattled Jacana. Common and widespread; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Conspicuous resident of marshes, ponds, wet pastures, and lowland riverbanks. Readily utters loud, high, twittering notes, often with an agitated quality.

Wattled Jacana *Jacana jacana*

9 in (23 cm). Resembles Northern Jacana, but adult has a **black back** and a **red frontal shield** that extends into a short wattle on either side of the bill. Juvenile nearly identical to juvenile Northern Jacana, but shows beginnings of red shield and wattle. Casual in southern Pacific; has been seen at Laurel (1984), San Isidro de El General (1989), San Vito (2003 and 2004), and Gamba (2001 and 2007). Like the Northern Jacana, it inhabits marshes, ponds, wet pastures, and lowland riverbanks.

Rails, Crakes, Gallinules

RALLIDAE. Many members of this widespread family are extremely difficult to see since they seldom leave the grassy cover of marsh habitat; they might go completely unnoticed if not for their frequent vocalizations. Their thin bodies facilitate moving through dense vegetation; they occasionally come into view along edges at dawn and dusk. Some species favor forested habitats, including mangroves, while gallinules and coots are relatively easy to see on or around ponds and open water in marshes. Colors of the head, bill, and legs are key field marks.

Common Gallinule *Gallinula galeata*

14 in (36 cm). Similar to American Coot, but adult's **red frontal shield** (adjoined to mostly red bill) is diagnostic; also shows **white stripe on side**. Juvenile is very similar to juvenile American Coot, but has darker bill and white side stripe. Widespread and fairly common; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Favors marshes with floating vegetation; walks along reedy edges and is frequently seen swimming. Makes a variety of clucking and cackling sounds.

American Coot *Fulica americana*

15 in (38 cm). The distinctive **white bill and adjoining frontal shield** set it apart from the Common Gallinule. Juvenile very similar to juvenile Common Gallinule, but has lighter bill and lacks side stripe. Widespread and fairly common, to 4,900 ft (1,500 m); resident population joined by migrants from Oct to April. Swims on ponds and lagoons and occasionally dives. Makes a variety of clucking and cackling sounds.

Northern Jacana

Wattled Jacana

Common Gallinule

American Coot

Purple Gallinule *Porphyrio martinicus*

13 in (33 cm). The colorful adult is instantly recognizable. Juvenile has buffy brown neck, whereas juvenile Common Gallinule and American Coot (p. 84) have grayish necks, and juvenile jacanas (p. 84) have white throat and breast. Widespread and common; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Walks through and clambers on vegetation around marshes, ponds, and riverbanks; rarely swims. Gives a high-pitched *kick*; also cackles like a hen.

Paint-billed Crake *Neocrex erythrops*

8 in (20 cm). Readily identified by combination of **red legs** and **two-tone bill** (which has a red base and yellow-green tip). First reported in 1985 (Valle de la Estrella) and now known to be resident in Caribbean and Golfo Dulce lowlands, as well as at Isla Damas. Rarely seen due to secretive behavior, but may be more common than is believed. Occurs in a variety of habitats, including wet pastures, rice fields, drainage ditches in banana plantations, and marshes. Sings a long series of accelerating and descending notes ending with several short, trilled *churr* notes.

Spotted Rail *Pardirallus maculatus*

10 in (25 cm). The **speckled foreparts** make it distinctive. Known from scattered infrequent reports in the Central Valley (from Cartago to Turrialba), the Palo Verde NP and Caño Negro regions, and the Palmar Norte area. Favors tall reedy growth at edges of marshes, as well as flooded rice fields. Produces a series of low, grunting, accelerating notes.

Clapper Rail *Rallus longirostris*

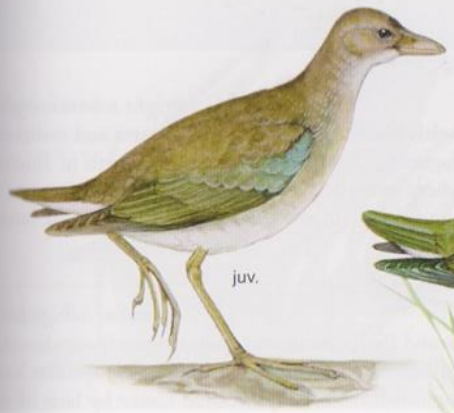
14 in (36 cm). No other **large** CR rail has **barred flanks and belly**; also note **orangish color of long bill and legs**. First reported in CR from mangroves near Bebedero (June 1997); also seen near the west end of the Amistad Bridge over the Tempisque River (July 2012) and repeatedly in Chomes since Sept 2012. Mostly at dawn and dusk, produces a series of dry clacking notes that accelerates then slows.

Uniform Crake *Amaurolimnas concolor*

8 in (20 cm). Looks and behaves like a small wood-rail (p. 90), but is **uniformly colored**; in silhouette, could be mistaken for the much more common Black-faced Antthrush (p. 224). Uncommon in Caribbean lowlands and foothills, rare in Golfo Dulce region; has also been found near San Vito and in Monteverde; to 4,300 ft (1,300 m). Forages on the floor of swamp forest and near streams within mature wet forest and advanced second growth. Whistles a crescendoing series of six or more upslurred *suweee* notes.

Sora *Porzana carolina*

8 in (20 cm). The **yellow bill** and **black face and throat** are diagnostic. Juvenile distinguished from adult by less black on face, darker bill, and dull buffy neck and breast; the similar but smaller Yellow-breasted Crake (p. 88) shows a distinct white superciliary. Fairly common migrant from Oct to early May; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Favors the reedy edges of marshes and ponds.



Purple Gallinule

Paint-billed Crake

Clapper Rail

Spotted Rail

Sora

Uniform Crake

Ocellated Crake *Micropygia schomburgkii*

6 in (15 cm). **White spots (with black borders) on upperparts** and unbarred **brownish underparts** are diagnostic. Known only from hills north of Buenos Aires. Inhabits grasslands, where extremely difficult to see. In alarm, gives a harsh, sizzling call; at dawn and dusk, sings a lengthy series of forceful notes: *pr-pr-pr-pr*.

White-throated Crake *Laterallus albigularis*

6 in (15 cm). Both Caribbean and Pacific races told apart from other crakes and rails in CR by combination of **barred flanks** and **rufous breast**. Juveniles have gray breast, but can be distinguished from Gray-breasted Crake by lack of rufous nape. Common and widespread in wet lowlands and foothills; also common in eastern Central Valley; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m); rare north of Quepos. Inhabits almost any damp grassy area; though very furtive, occasionally reveals itself at edges and openings. Frequently utters a loud, descending *churr*, lasting five seconds or more.

Gray-breasted Crake *Laterallus exilis*

6 in (15 cm). Differentiated from similar crakes and rails by **ashy-gray breast** and **rufous nape**. Uncommon in Caribbean lowlands and the Golfo Dulce region. Prefers wet grassy areas with standing water; also occurs on riverbanks. Gives a series of up to ten high notes in rapid succession, with the first note slightly higher and longer: *teek, teetee-tee-teek*. Also makes a descending *churr* (like that of the White-throated Crake but softer and scratchier).

Yellow-breasted Crake *Porzana flaviventer*

5 in (13 cm). No other CR crake or rail has a **black eye line** and **white superciliary** (compare with juvenile Sora [p. 86]). Known from a few records from Palo Verde NP and Caño Negro regions; perhaps occurs in other suitable lowland sites. Inhabits the grassy margins of marshes and ponds. Utters a high, scratchy *kreerh*.

Black Rail *Laterallus jamaicensis*

6 in (15 cm). No other CR rail or crake is as dark, especially on breast. Status unknown, but there are sight reports from Palo Verde NP, Caño Negro, and Golfo Dulce regions (dates uncited). Extremely furtive in marsh grass and wet pastures. On moonlit nights, gives a three-note call, with the last note lower: *ki-kee-doo*.

Ocellated Crake

Pacific race

Caribbean race

White-throated Crake

Gray-breasted Crake

Black Rail

Yellow-breasted Crake

Rails, Crakes, Gallinules

Rufous-necked Wood-Rail *Aramides axillaris*

11 in (28 cm). Similar to Gray-necked Wood-Rail, but **head and neck are rufous**; also note **gray mantle**. Rare in Gulf of Nicoya mangroves; also reported from humid forest in Cerro Plano (near Monteverde) and swamp forest near Bijagua de Upala. Call is a rollicking *ki-kyi-kip-kyip*, repeated numerous times.

Gray-necked Wood-Rail *Aramides cajaneus*

15 in (38 cm). The gray neck sets it apart from the smaller Rufous-necked Wood-Rail. Common and widespread in wet lowlands, foothills, and Central Valley; uncommon in northern Pacific; to 4,600 ft (1,400 m). Forages on the floor of mature forest, tall second growth, and even in forest remnants, usually near water; also in mangroves. The resounding chorus brings to mind a group of drunken chickens: *káh-klah, káh-klah, kah koh-ho-ho-ho-hah.*

New World Vultures

CATHARTIDAE. Often mistaken for hawks (and far more often seen) as they soar in search of carrion, their preferred food. Members of the genus *Cathartes* have a keen sense of smell, while the other genera rely on vision for finding food. All have strong, hooked beaks for ripping the flesh of dead animals. The color of their bare heads is important in determining species.

Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture *Cathartes burrovianus*

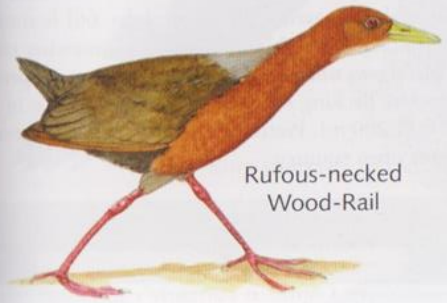
25 in (64 cm). Not reliably told apart from Turkey Vulture unless **orange-yellow head** color is visible. Fairly common in Caño Negro region, rare to casual in Pacific lowlands. An open country species that may feed primarily on dead fish.

Black Vulture *Coragyps atratus*

25 in (64 cm). The **black head** differentiates it from all but the juvenile King Vulture (p. 92), which is distinguished by its pale iris. The **white patch on outer primaries** (visible in flight) sets the Black Vulture apart from the three other CR vultures, as well as the Common Black-Hawk (p. 106). Generally the most commonly seen soaring bird countrywide below timberline, though less common in extensively forested areas. In addition to carrion, also feeds on human refuse and fruit (e.g., oil palm and bananas).

Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura*

30 in (76 cm). Told apart from other vultures by its **red head**. Resident race distinguished from migrants by pale-blue nape. In flight, all Turkey Vultures have distinctive **two-tone underwing pattern**, as does the Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture. The similarly patterned Zone-tailed Hawk (p. 106) is told apart by its feathered black head, yellow cere and legs, and faint tail bands; both species typically soar with wings held above the horizontal. Common resident countrywide, though uncommon above 6,600 ft (2,000 m). Spectacular numbers of passage migrants traverse CR from mid- Sept to late Oct and from late Jan to early May, mostly in Caribbean lowlands.

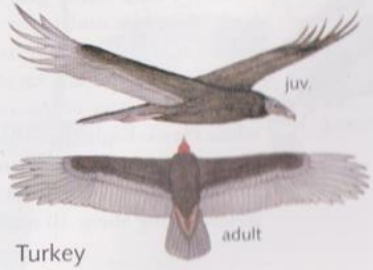


Rufous-necked Wood-Rail

Gray-necked Wood-Rail

Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture

Black Vulture



Turkey Vulture

New World Vultures

King Vulture *Sarcoramphus papa*

32 in (81 cm). Adults are distinctive; even flying at a distance, the **black-and-white plumage pattern** should show (soaring Wood Stork [p. 66] is similarly patterned, but has long neck and legs). The blackish juvenile somewhat resembles other vultures in flight, but shows **uniformly dark underwing**; on perched juveniles, note **pale iris** and white flecking on underparts. Uncommon in lowlands and foothills; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Prefers areas where mature forest still exists, though readily soars over open country.

Osprey

PANDIONIDAE. Closely related to the Accipitridae, the Osprey is currently considered distinct enough to merit being in its own monotypic family. Its specialized diet of fish has driven the evolution of unique characteristics, including spiny pads on the soles of its feet and a reversible outer toe, both of which aid it in gripping its slippery prey. The Osprey has oily, waterproof plumage and is also equipped with valves that seal its nostrils when it dives into water.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

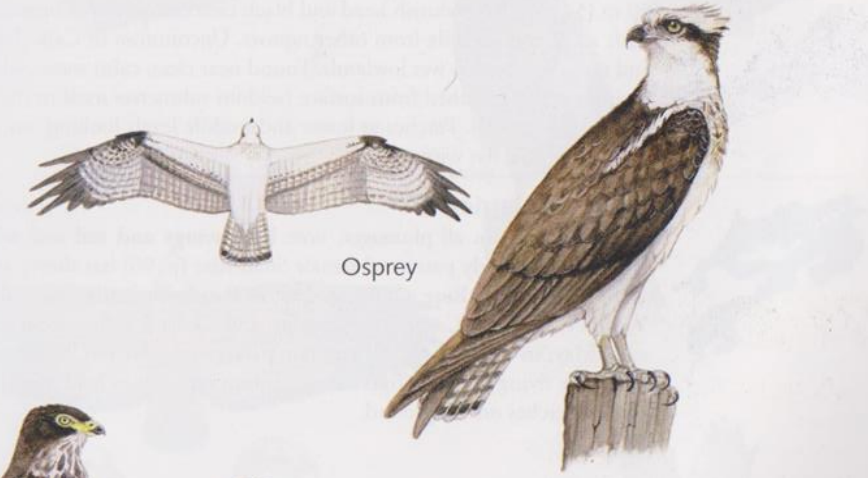
23 in (58 cm). **Dark eye line** separates **white crown** from white underparts; soars on long, distinctively **crooked wings**. Common winter resident from early Sept to April, to 9,200 ft (2,800 m); common passage migrant along coasts from early Sept to Oct and from March to April; uncommon summer resident from May to Aug, when it is known to occur at Lake Arenal and in southern Pacific lowlands (and likely elsewhere). Found near water, from sea coasts to highland trout ponds. Perches on high, exposed branches; hunts for fish, typically by hovering then plunging feetfirst into the water.

Hawks, Kites, Eagles

ACCIPITRIDAE. A diverse, cosmopolitan family of predatory birds characterized by keen vision (for finding prey), powerful feet with sharp talons (for catching and killing prey), and a sharp, hooked bill (for ripping prey apart). Except during the spectacular migrations of a few species, most species occur in relatively low densities, which makes them less likely to be encountered. Additionally, only a few species typically use exposed, conspicuous perches or soar regularly. Many juveniles can be very difficult to identify to species level.

Gray-headed Kite *Leptodon cayanensis*

20 in (51 cm). **Small gray head** (often appears dove-like) contrasts with black back and white underparts; also note **bluish-gray soft parts**. In flight, recalls a hawk-eagle (p. 110), but combination of **black wing linings** and **white body** is unique. Juveniles are variable in plumage with pale, intermediate, and dark morphs—all have yellow-orange soft parts. Pale juvenile resembles Black-and-white Hawk-Eagle (p. 110), but is brown and white and has **unfeathered tarsi**. Uncommon in lowlands and foothills; to 3,000 ft (900 m). Perches in canopy and at forest edge; soars on broad wings. Call is a series of high, excited barking notes, lasting about 10 seconds.



Savanna Hawk *Buteogallus meridionalis*

22 in (56 cm). A long-legged hawk of open country. Adult's overall dull-rufous coloration is distinctive (brighter rufous Black-collared Hawk has white head and black on upper breast). Juvenile is very similar to juvenile black-hawks (p. 106), but shows buff to rufous edging on wing coverts and thighs. First reported near Zancudo (April 2008); probably established in CR, but more data are needed. Hunts on the ground or from a low perch; follows plows and fires. Soars regularly on very long, broad wings.

Harris's Hawk *Parabuteo unicinctus*

21 in (53 cm). **Rufous shoulders and thighs** of both adult and juvenile are diagnostic; in flight, note white rump and base of tail. Uncommon in lowlands of northern Pacific and Caño Negro region. Prefers open country with scattered trees for perching, but also uses utility poles; soars regularly. Utters a deep, harsh *raaaah*.

Black-collared Hawk *Busarellus nigricollis*

20 in (51 cm). The whitish head and black crescent on upper breast distinguish both adult and juvenile from other raptors. Uncommon in Caño Negro region and rare elsewhere in wet lowlands. Found near clear, calm water, where it feeds mainly on fish snatched from surface (seldom submerses itself in the manner of an Osprey [p. 92]). Perches at lower and middle levels looking out over water; soars on broad, flat wings.

Northern Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

20 in (51 cm). In all plumages, note **long wings and tail** and **white rump**. Somewhat similarly patterned female Snail Kite (p. 96) has short, unbarred tail and orangish cere. Rare winter resident in Pacific lowlands (most likely in Palo Verde NP region), Caño Negro region, and Central Valley, from early Oct to early May; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m); rare passage migrant in Caribbean lowlands. Hunts by flying low over open areas, gliding with wings held above horizontal; readily perches on the ground.

Hook-billed Kite *Chondrohierax uncinatus*

17 in (43 cm). In all plumages, can be recognized by decidedly **hooked bill, pale iris**, yellow-orange legs, and bare **greenish-yellow cere and lore**. The black morph is similar to the male Snail Kite, but the latter species has a yellow-orange to reddish cere. Rare in lowlands and foothills; to 3,300 ft (1,000 m). Inhabits swamp forest and wooded areas near water, where it preys on snails and lizards. Occasionally soars on broad, oval wings that are pinched in at base of trailing edge.

Snail Kite *Rostrhamus sociabilis*

17 in (43 cm). The **yellow-orange to reddish cere** distinguishes the male Snail Kite from the black morph Hook-billed Kite, which has a heavier, hooked bill; male further distinguished by **white basal half of tail** (especially obvious in flight). These features also differentiate female and juvenile birds from other streaked juvenile raptors and the adult female Northern Harrier (p. 94). Female resembles juvenile, but is darker. Fairly common in Palo Verde NP and Caño Negro regions; rare at other lowland sites, though now established at the Angostura Reservoir, near Turrialba. Perches near the ground and flies low over freshwater marshes in search of snails.

Crane Hawk *Geranospiza caerulescens*

19 in (48 cm). Differs from other essentially black raptors by combination of **red iris, dark-gray cere**, and long **orange-red legs**; in flight, note **white crescent across primaries** (juvenile has white on face and whitish barring on underparts). Uncommon in lowlands, to 1,600 ft (500 m); casual in foothills and western Central Valley, to 3,300 ft (1,000 m). Forages for small vertebrates and large insects at middle and upper levels of mature forest and forest edge by reaching into bromeliads and knotholes with its long legs; soars infrequently. Utters a rather agitated, nasal scream: *keeur*.

Swallow-tailed Kite *Elanoides forficatus*

23 in (58 cm). Handsome and graceful in flight. The **long, forked tail** is diagnostic. Common breeding migrant from late Dec to mid-Sept, mostly in foothills and mountains; generally absent from western Central Valley and northern Pacific; some year-round residents occur in southern Pacific and on Caribbean slope. Often in small groups (up to fifty or more in migration); usually consumes prey while in flight.

Pearl Kite *Gampsonyx swainsonii*

9 in (23 cm).The **buffy yellow forecrown and cheeks** and **rufous flanks and thighs** readily identify this **tiny** raptor. First reported in CR in the mid-1990s. Uncommon on the Pacific slope; to 3,300 ft (1,000 m). Has been reported in Caribbean lowlands, but apparently not established yet. Prefers open areas with scattered trees.

White-tailed Kite *Elanus leucurus*

16 in (41 cm). The **white tail** and **black shoulders** are diagnostic. Since its arrival in CR in the mid-1950s, this species has become fairly common countrywide; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Flies over open areas, including cities; often hovers while searching for prey.

Mississippi Kite *Ictinia mississippiensis*

14 in (36 cm). Adult told apart from adult Plumbeous Kite by **all-black tail** and **white patch on upper surface of secondaries**. Juvenile very similar to juvenile Plumbeous Kite, but lacks rufous on primaries, and wing tips do not extend beyond tip of tail when perched. Passage migrants are common in Caribbean lowlands and uncommon in Pacific lowlands and Central Valley, from mid-Sept to mid-Oct and from late March to early May. Mostly seen in obvious migratory groups, flying and soaring on long, pointed wings.

Plumbeous Kite *Ictinia plumbea*

14 in (36 cm). Adult and juvenile differentiated from adult and juvenile Mississippi Kite by **rufous on primaries**; also note that **wing tips extend beyond tip of tail** when perched. Adult further differentiated from adult Mississippi Kite by two thin white bars on underside of tail. Breeding migrants (present from Feb to Sept) are fairly common in Caño Negro region and in the vicinity of mangroves along northern half of Pacific coast; rare elsewhere in lowlands. Passage migrants are common along Caribbean coast from Feb to March and from July to Sept. Perches on high, exposed branches and soars regularly, often catching insects on the wing.

Tiny Hawk *Accipiter superciliosus*

Male 8 in (20 cm); female 11 in (28 cm). This **very small** hawk recalls a Sharp-shinned Hawk, but Tiny Hawk never combines rufous barring below with dark gray above. **Noticeably darker crown** and lack of yellow orbital skin distinguish it from Barred Forest-Falcon (p. 116). Uncommon in Golfo Dulce lowlands, in Caribbean lowlands and foothills, and also on Pacific side of northern cordilleras; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Occasionally perches on exposed branches at edge of mature wet forest, but normally stays concealed in dense vegetation, from where it ambushes small birds, especially hummingbirds.

Sharp-shinned Hawk *Accipiter striatus*

Male 11 in (28 cm); female 14 in (36 cm). In all plumages, nearly identical to the Cooper's Hawk; best told apart by **square tip of tail**. Adult somewhat resembles Tiny Hawk, but combines rufous barring below with dark gray above. Juvenile resembles Merlin (p. 112), but has **yellow iris**; on perched birds, also note that wings do not extend beyond base of tail. Uncommon migrant from mid-Oct to March, generally at middle elevations; from 1,600 to 8,200 ft (500 to 2,500 m). Usually inconspicuous because it hunts for birds from cover of vegetation at edge of second growth, fields, and gardens; occasionally seen soaring.

Bicolored Hawk *Accipiter bicolor*

Male 14 in (36 cm); female 17 in (43 cm). The **rufous thighs** on the two-toned gray adult are diagnostic. Juveniles are browner above, vary from white to buffy below, and do not always have rufous thighs; pale juvenile resembles pale morph Collared Forest-Falcon (p. 114), but has yellow (not greenish) cere and lacks dark crescent on ear coverts. In addition, pale juvenile resembles some juvenile Barred Forest-Falcons (p. 116), as well as adult Slaty-backed Forest-Falcon (p. 116), but lacks yellow orbital skin. Rare in humid and wet regions; to 5,900 ft (1,800 m). Ambushes avian prey from perches at almost any level in mature wet forest, tall second growth, forest edge, and gardens. Gives a series of more than a dozen barking, trogon-like notes: *keh-keh-keh-keh…*

Cooper's Hawk *Accipiter cooperii*

Male 15 in (38 cm); female 18 in (46 cm). A large version of the Sharp-shinned Hawk, but with a **rounded tail tip**. Uncommon migrant from mid-Oct to March; from 2,300 to 9,800 ft (700 to 3,000 m). Most often seen flying in the typical *Accipiter* manner of several flaps followed by a short sail.

Gray-bellied Hawk *Accipiter poliogaster*

Male 16 in (41 cm); female 18 in (46 cm). A very confusing raptor. Adult resembles adult Slaty-backed Forest-Falcon (p. 116), but has fully feathered face; also similar to adult Bicolored Hawk, but paler below and without rufous thighs. Juvenile is remarkably like a miniature Ornate Hawk-Eagle (p. 110), but lacks crest and has unfeathered legs. Status unclear; a juvenile was photographed at La Selva (near Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí) in June 2008 and March 2009—very likely the same individual; there is also a sight report of a flying juvenile from near the Arenal Volcano (Aug 2011). Behavior not well known, but probably employs typical *Accipiter* technique of ambushing smaller birds.

Barred Hawk *Morphnarchus princeps*

24 in (61 cm). No other CR raptor combines a **blackish head and breast** with **finely barred underparts**; in flight, shows notably broad wings and short tail. Fairly common at middle elevations on Caribbean slope; from 1,300 to 5,200 ft (400 to 1,600 m), and up to 8,200 ft (2,500 m) in the south. Also fairly common on Pacific slope of Talamanca Cordillera, above 4,300 ft (1,300 m); rare on Osa and Nicoya Peninsulas. Perches at middle levels of montane wet forest and forest edge, but most often seen soaring. In flight, frequently vocalizes with loud, clear whistles (*whEE-er*) that are sometimes run together in a fast series.

White Hawk *Pseudastur albicollis*

23 in (58 cm). No other CR raptor has an **all-white back**. Fairly common in Caribbean lowlands and foothills, on Pacific slope of Guanacaste Cordillera, and from Carara NP south; rare above 3,900 ft (1,200 m); also rare on southern Nicoya Peninsula. Perches placidly at middle levels of mature wet forest, advanced second growth, and forest edge; occasionally follows foraging troops of monkeys in order to catch the lizards and large insects that they flush out; soars regularly on broad wings. In flight, delivers a harsh, rasping *hee-EE-ah*.

Semiplumbeous Hawk *Leucopternis semiplumbeus*

15 in (38 cm). The **orange cere and legs** and **white underparts** are diagnostic. Fairly common in Caribbean lowlands, rarely above 1,600 ft (500 m). Perches at middle levels of mature wet forest, advanced second growth, and forest edge; does not soar. Calls with a short series of upslurred notes: *klerEE-klerEE-klerEE*.

Short-tailed Hawk *Buteo brachyurus*

16 in (41 cm). In flight, both pale and dark morph birds show **dark tips on both the pale primaries and the darker secondaries**. The darkish tail is faintly banded and, despite the bird's name, not particularly short. Pale morph birds have head pattern like White-tailed Hawk, but head is brown, not gray. Juveniles are quite similar to their respective adult morphs. Widespread; to 6,600 ft (2,000 m). One of the most common soaring raptors in CR; rarely seen perched. Gives a high-pitched, harsh *keeeea*.

White-tailed Hawk *Geranoaetus albicaudatus*

23 in (58 cm). Adult resembles pale morph Short-tailed Hawk, but note **gray head** and **rufous shoulders** (visible on perched birds). In flight, note obvious **white tail** (which looks decidedly short) with single black subterminal band. On juvenile and rare dark morph adult, note **pale-gray tail that contrasts with dark body**. Uncommon in northern Pacific, rare in Central Valley and intermontane valleys of southern Pacific; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Prefers cleared areas; soars on broad wings and often hangs stationary in the wind. Repeats a shrill, whistled *kleewee*.

Double-toothed Kite *Harpagus bidentatus*

14 in (36 cm). Recalls a Broad-winged Hawk, but the **dark stripe down center of white throat** is diagnostic. In flight, recalls an accipiter (p. 100), but the **puffy white undertail coverts** are conspicuous. Adult male lacks rufous breast and is evenly barred below. Fairly common; to 5,600 ft (1,700 m). Regularly soars on sunny mornings; perches at middle levels of forest, second growth, forest edge, and gardens; will follow foraging troops of Capuchin and Squirrel Monkeys in order to catch the lizards and large insects that these mammals flush out. Calls with several high, thin *tsip* notes followed by two or three longer *tseeeah* notes.

Roadside Hawk *Rupornis magnirostris*

15 in (38 cm). The **gray head and breast** together with **rufous barring** on rest of underparts readily identify perched adult. In flight, the **rufous in primaries** is definitive. Juvenile recalls various other streaked juvenile hawks, but note **rufous barring on thighs**. Widespread and fairly common; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Favors light woodlands and open areas with scattered trees; typically perches fairly low (even on fence posts); seldom soars. Delivers a squeaky, piercing *kwe-EEE-ee*.

Broad-winged Hawk *Buteo platypterus*

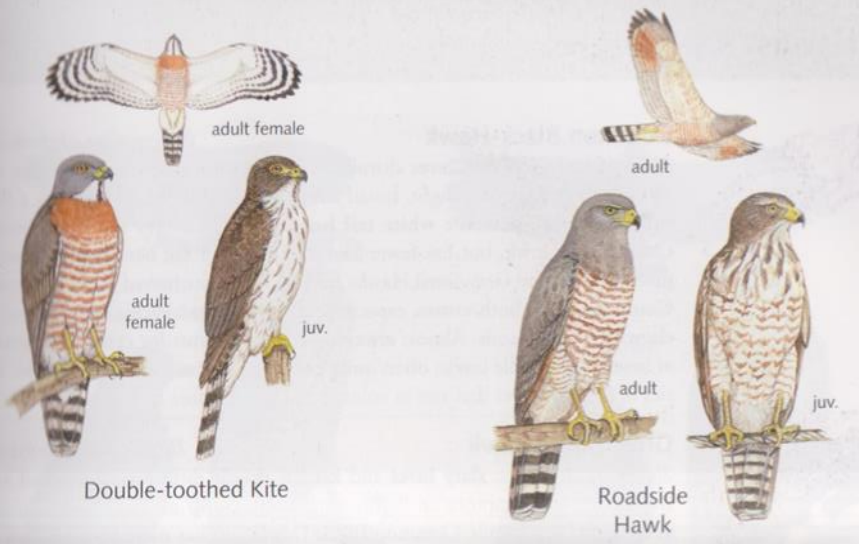
16 in (41 cm). Perched adult somewhat resembles Double-toothed Kite, but note brown head and **dark stripe on side of throat**. In flight, seen from below, the **whitish flight feathers have black tips**; also note black-and-white tail bands (compare with Gray Hawk). Rare dark morph (not illustrated) has dark-brown body and wing linings. Juvenile told apart from other streaked juvenile hawks by **dark malar stripe**. Abundant passage migrant from Oct to mid-Nov and from early March to May; traverses CR in spectacular soaring flocks (usually with Turkey Vultures [p. 90] and Swainson's Hawks [p. 108]); to 11,500 ft (3,500 m). Common and widespread winter resident from Sept to May, mostly below 6,600 ft (2,000 m). Perches at middle levels of forest edge; soars frequently. Whistles a high, even *pteeeeeee*.

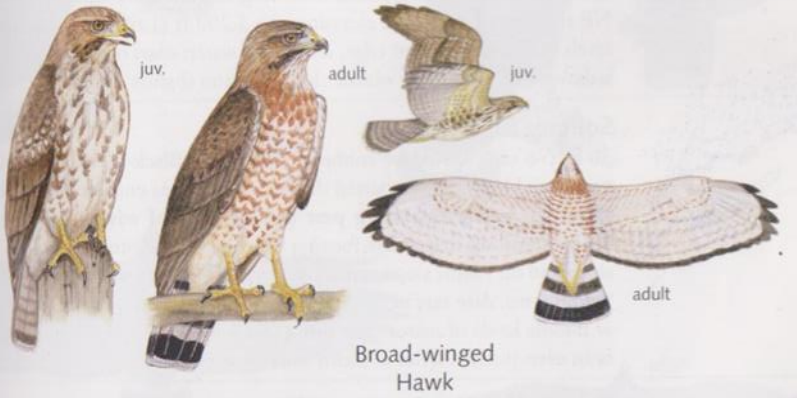
Gray Hawk *Buteo plagiatus*

17 in (43 cm). Formerly considered conspecific with Gray-lined Hawk; adult distinguished by **plain-gray upperparts**; on juvenile, note **solid dark crown**. Adult resembles Roadside Hawk, but has **gray barring below** (not rufous) and **all-gray wings** (no rufous in primaries). In flight, **black-and-white tail bands** recall a Broad-winged Hawk, but note overall gray coloration. Juvenile closely resembles juvenile Roadside and Broad-winged Hawks, but has **white superciliary and cheeks** and **bold, teardrop spotting below**. Juvenile also similar to juvenile Common Black-Hawk (p. 106), but lacks barred undertail coverts. Fairly common throughout mapped range, south to about Dominical; to 3,600 ft (1,100 m). Prefers forest edge and open areas with scattered trees. Uses exposed perches, including utility poles; soars regularly. Whistles a shrill, descending *PEE-yeeur*.

Gray-lined Hawk *Buteo nitidus*

17 in (43 cm). Recently split from Gray Hawk; adult distinguished by **gray-barred upperparts** and wider white tail band. Juvenile distinguished by paler face, streaked crown, and **dark blotches** on sides of breast and flanks. (Also compare with other species mentioned under Gray Hawk.) Uncommon in lowlands of southern Pacific, from about Palmar Norte to the Panamanian border. In habits and voice, similar to Gray Hawk, but call is more abrupt.





Common Black-Hawk *Buteogallus anthracinus*

22 in (56 cm). **Yellow lores** distinguish adult from other black raptors with yellow cere and legs; in flight, broad wings and short tail could suggest a Black Vulture (p. 90), but note **white tail band**. Juvenile is very similar to juvenile Great Black-Hawk, but has fewer and slightly wider tail bands; also resembles juvenile Gray and Gray-lined Hawks (p. 104), but note barred undertail coverts. Common along both coasts, especially in and around Pacific mangroves; rare elsewhere in lowlands. Almost always near water; hunts for crabs from perches at lower and middle levels; often quite confiding. Soars regularly. Whistles a series of ringing notes that rise in volume and pitch before fading.

Great Black-Hawk *Buteogallus urubitinga*

26 in (66 cm). The **slaty lores** and **barred thighs** differentiate perched adult from other black raptors; in flight, note **white rump and tail band**. Juvenile very similar to juvenile Common Black-Hawk, but has more finely barred tail. Widespread but generally rare, becoming slightly more common in Palo Verde NP region and at middle elevations; to 5,200 ft (1,600 m). Perches at middle levels of forest and forest edge, often near water; soars occasionally. Flight call is a drawn-out, screaming whistle that fluctuates slightly in pitch.

Solitary Eagle *Buteogallus solitarius*

30 in (76 cm). Could be confused with Great Black-Hawk, but adult is **slate gray** (not black) with unbarred thighs; in flight, has enormous broad wings and **short tail barely extending past trailing edge of wings**. Juvenile has heavy brown mottling that nearly forms a band across the breast. Rare on Caribbean slope and on Pacific slope of Talamanca Cordillera; from 1,600 to 7,200 ft (500 to 2,200 m). Also rare in Golfo Dulce region and hills of Osa Peninsula. Perches at middle levels of mature wet forest and forest edge; soars regularly. Flight call is an even-pitched series of short, excited notes.

Zone-tailed Hawk *Buteo albonotatus*

20 in (51 cm). In flight, most likely mistaken for a Turkey Vulture (p. 90), but note feathered black head, yellow cere and legs, and whitish tail bands. Rarely seen perched birds resemble black-hawks, but have slimmer build, longer tail, and shorter legs. Uncommon in northern Pacific, south to Tárcoles, and in Central Valley; rare elsewhere in lowlands and foothills; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Occurs in open, often marshy, areas. Flies with rocking motion and with wings held above the horizontal.

Swainson's Hawk *Buteo swainsoni*

21 in (53 cm). In all plumages (adults and juveniles of pale, intermediate, and dark morphs), note the distinctive flight silhouette with **long, narrow, pointed wings** and fairly long tail; intermediate in size between Broad-winged Hawk (p. 104) and Turkey Vulture (p. 90), both of which travel with Swainson's Hawks. Abundant and widespread passage migrant, from late Sept to Nov (when most numerous in Caribbean lowlands) and from late Feb to early May; to 11,500 ft (3,500 m). Rare winter resident in Pacific lowlands and western Central Valley, from Oct to March; to 3,300 ft (1,000 m). Migrates through CR in large, soaring flocks.

Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis*

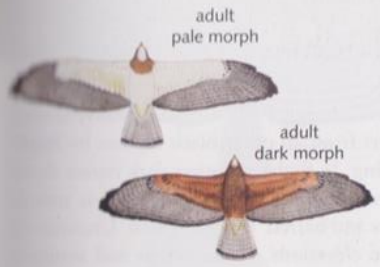
22 in (56 cm). In flight, adults of both resident and migrant races have diagnostic **orange-rufous tail** (even the rare dark morph migrant). Resident adult has **pale-rufous belly**; migrants are variable but typically show **dark streaking across belly**. Juvenile resident has heavily streaked underparts and buffy tail (grayish in most migrants) with narrow dark bands. Resident race (indicated on map) is fairly common in highlands above 4,900 ft (1,500 m), and uncommon from 4,900 ft (1,500 m) down to about 2,600 ft (800 m). Migrants (not indicated on map) are uncommon from Oct to April and can turn up almost anywhere, even in lowlands. Residents prefer partially cleared areas in montane regions, and seek high, exposed perches; they freely soar and often hang stationary in the wind. Screams a high, grating *keEEaah*.

Crested Eagle *Morphnus guianensis*

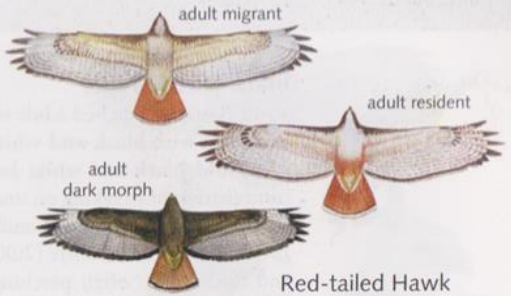
33 in (84 cm). Larger than any other CR raptor except the Harpy Eagle, which has twice the bulk. Adult pale morph similar to Harpy Eagle, but lacks black upper breast. Adult dark morph distinguished by bold barring on underparts. In flight, wing linings are white on pale morph and coarsely barred on dark morph. Juvenile closely resembles juvenile Harpy Eagle, but has **single-pointed crest**. Rare in Caribbean lowlands and foothills and in southern Pacific; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Perches at middle and upper levels of mature wet forest and forest edge; hunts medium-sized vertebrate prey; sometimes soars. Gives a shrill, rising, two-note whistle.

Harpy Eagle *Harpia harpyja*

Male 38 in (97 cm); female 42 in (107 cm). A massive bird of prey; adult recognized by **black band across upper breast**. In flight, wing linings have some black barring and spotting. Juvenile similar to smaller juvenile Crested Eagle, but has **double-pointed crest**. Now very rare and perhaps only on Osa Peninsula and in southern Talamanca Cordillera; to 6,600 ft (2,000 m). Formerly inhabited the Caribbean slope, but the only confirmed report in several decades is of a bird photographed at Tortuguero NP (Dec 2009). Hunts within the canopy of mature wet forest, mostly ambushing medium-sized mammals; does not soar. Call is a screaming *eeeeaa*. The national bird of Panama.



Swainson's Hawk



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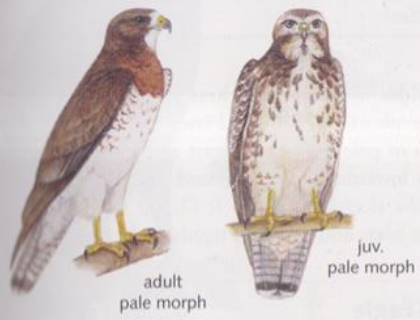
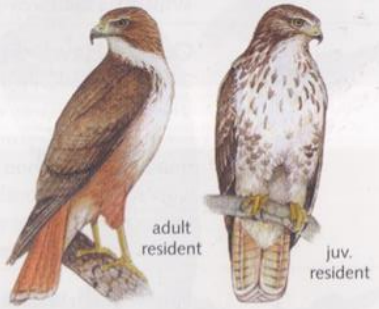




Harpy Eagle

Crested Eagle

Hawks, Kites, Eagles

Black Hawk-Eagle *Spizaetus tyrannus*

26 in (66 cm). Perched adult told apart from all other black raptors by **feathered tarsi with black-and-white barring**. In flight, no other dark raptor shows such **bold black-and-white barring on flight feathers**. Juvenile has unique combination of streaking on underparts and barred, feathered tarsi. Uncommon in wet lowlands, foothills, and middle elevations of Caribbean and southern Pacific slopes; to 6,600 ft (2,000 m). Favors second growth, semi-open areas, and forest edge, often perching fairly low; soars freely and to great heights. Whistles a loud *weh-weh-WEEew*.

Ornate Hawk-Eagle *Spizaetus ornatus*

24 in (61 cm). The **tawny sides of head and chest** are diagnostic on adult (though compare with juvenile Gray-bellied Hawk [p. 100]). Juvenile distinguished by combination of pale head and breast and **barred thighs and flanks**. Uncommon in wet lowlands, foothills, and middle elevations of Caribbean and southern Pacific slopes; to 7,200 ft (2,200 m). Perches at all levels inside mature wet forest; soars and vocalizes regularly. In flight, whistles a loud *wee-ew weeh-weh-weh*.

Black-and-white Hawk-Eagle *Spizaetus melanoleucus*

23 in (58 cm). Closely resembles pale juvenile Gray-headed Kite (p. 92), but note **orange cere, yellow iris**, and **feathered tarsi**; also similar to juvenile Ornate Hawk-Eagle, but has **black mask** and **unbarred thighs**. Rare in lowlands and foothills of Caribbean and southern Pacific slopes; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Soars on flat wings; perches inconspicuously in canopy and at edge of mature wet forest. Whistles a series of clear notes: *klee, klee, klee…*

Falcons, Caracaras

FALCONIDAE. Falcons were long considered close relatives of hawks, but recent DNA evidence has shown that the two groups are not closely related. Their similarities are the result of convergent evolution, in which both families independently evolved similar structures (e.g., sharp beak, strong talons, and powerful flight) for a predatory existence. The members of this cosmopolitan family inhabit almost every imaginable habitat, and employ several distinct foraging strategies. They range from carrion-eaters of open country to secretive bird-hunters of tropical forests. Females are larger than males in many species.

Red-throated Caracara *Ibycter americanus*

20 in (51 cm). Almost more suggestive of a guan than a raptor, but differentiated by **bare red facial skin**. Rare in Golfo Dulce region and in Caribbean lowlands and foothills; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Noisy pairs or small groups roam through upper levels of mature wet forest, second growth, forest edge, and gardens. Feeds largely on larvae extracted from wasp and bee nests. Gives raucous shouts similar to those of macaws (p. 172).

Black Hawk-Eagle

Ornate Hawk-Eagle

Black-and-white Hawk-Eagle

Red-throated Caracara

American Kestrel *Falco sparverius*

10 in (25 cm). Somewhat similar to Merlin, but the **two bold bars on side of head** and the mostly **rufous tail** readily identify both sexes. Widespread but generally uncommon migrant from Sept to April, most likely in northern Pacific and Central Valley; to 5,900 ft (1,800 m). Favors open fields, where it perches on posts, utility wires, and exposed branches of isolated trees; often hovers while hunting for insect prey. Gives a shrill, repeated *kli-kli-kli*, similar to that of Bat Falcon.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Male 10 in (25 cm); female 13 in (33 cm). Told apart from American Kestrel by **dark tail** and **lack of bold facial pattern**; similar to juvenile Sharp-shinned Hawk (p. 100), but has dark iris and long wings that nearly reach the tip of the tail (noticeable when perched). In flight, has powerful, steady wingbeats. Uncommon migrant from Sept to mid-March; mostly migrates along coasts, but can occur anywhere, even above timberline. Favors open areas, where it pursues small birds and insect prey.

Bat Falcon *Falco rufigularis*

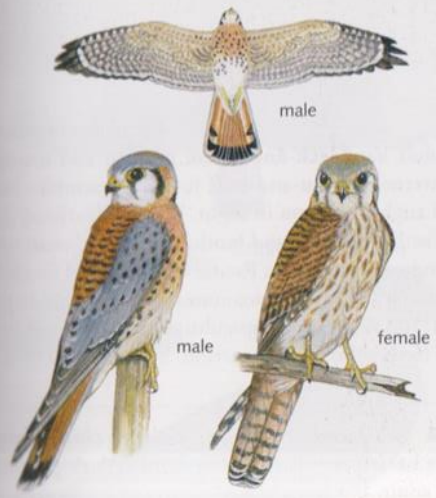
Male 10 in (25 cm); female 12 in (30 cm). Color of throat, upper breast, and sides of neck is always fairly uniform on a given bird, though it varies between individuals (white to pale rufous). The fine barring on the dark midsection also varies, from white to rufous. Very similar to Orange-breasted Falcon (p. 380), but on that bird the upper breast and sides of neck are a different color than the throat. In flight, can look remarkably like a White-collared Swift (p. 130). Uncommon in wet lowlands and middle elevations, rare in northern Pacific; generally to 4,900 ft (1,500 m) and rarely as high as 9,500 ft (2,900 m). Found on high, exposed perches in partly to mostly cleared areas; captures fast-flying prey (e.g., swallows, swifts, hummingbirds, and bats) on the wing. Shrill *ki-ki-ki-ki...* is similar to call of American Kestrel.

Aplomado Falcon *Falco femoralis*

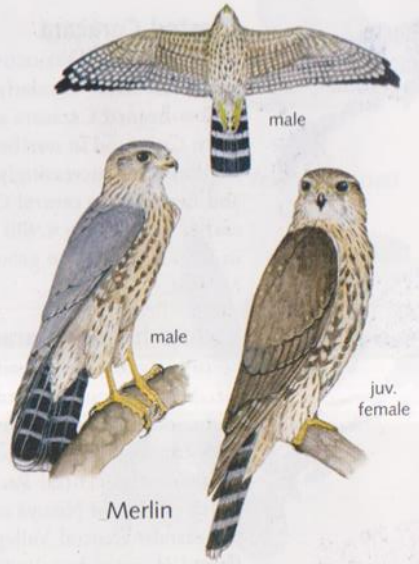
Male 15 in (38 cm); female 17 in (43 cm). The bold head pattern, white throat and breast, dark belly band, and pale-rufous lower underparts are diagnostic. Most of the scattered reports in the last few decades are from the Palo Verde NP region, including Rancho Humo (July 2010) and Chomes (Sept 2010); but it has also been photographed in Kekoldi (Dec 2010) and Medio Queso (March 2013). Hunts from exposed perch in open country.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

Male 15 in (38 cm); female 18 in (46 cm). **Wide moustachial bar** gives a hooded appearance, distinguishing even streaked juvenile birds. Passage migrants are fairly common along Caribbean coast and occasionally occur in the Central Valley and Pacific lowlands, from mid-Sept to Oct and from March to early May. Winter residents are uncommon in Palo Verde NP and Caño Negro regions, near the mouth of the Tárcoles River, and in the western Central Valley; rare elsewhere in lowlands and foothills; from mid-Sept to early May. Winter residents prefer open areas with concentrations of waterfowl; they attack prey in fast, powerful dives; regularly soar.



American Kestrel



Merlin

Bat Falcon

Aplomado Falcon

Peregrine Falcon

Crested Caracara *Caracara cheriway*

23 in (58 cm). Distinctive adult has **black-and-white pattern** and **orange-red facial skin**. Similarly patterned brown-and-buff juvenile resembles both Yellow-headed Caracara and Laughing Falcon in flight, but note dark cap and belly. Common in northern Pacific lowlands and foothills; with deforestation, it's becoming increasingly common in southern Pacific lowlands and foothills, and in northern central Caribbean lowlands; uncommon in Central Valley to east of Cartago; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Prefers agricultural areas; perches high in trees as well as on ground; feeds primarily on carrion. The national bird of Mexico.

Yellow-headed Caracara *Milvago chimachima*

16 in (41 cm). Adult similar to Laughing Falcon, but note **thin, dark postocular stripe**. Juvenile resembles adult, but has streaked head and underparts. In flight, both adult and juvenile resemble juvenile Crested Caracara, but lack dark cap and belly. Since first CR record in 1973, has become common in southern and central Pacific and in the western Central Valley; uncommon north of Gulf of Nicoya on the Pacific slope, in the Caño Negro region, and in the eastern Central Valley from Cartago to Turrialba; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Found in agricultural areas; perches high in trees as well as on ground, and even on the backs of cattle; feeds mostly on carrion. Utters a dreadful, nasal scream: *reeeeaaah*.

Laughing Falcon *Herpetotheres cachinnans*

20 in (51 cm). The **broad black mask** is diagnostic. In flight, shows **buffy patch in primaries** similar to that of Yellow-headed Caracara and juvenile Crested Caracara. Fairly common and widespread in lowlands and foothills; generally to 3,900 ft (1,200 m), rarely up to 5,900 ft (1,800 m). Often perches conspicuously at forest edge and in open areas with scattered trees; feeds primarily on snakes. Calls mainly at dawn and dusk with a loud, far-carrying *gwa-co* (the first note higher and louder), thus its local common name, *guaco*. The full song is often given in duet, starting with single *gwa!* notes and accelerating into a crazed laughing cacophony.

Collared Forest-Falcon *Micrastur semitorquatus*

Male 20 in (51 cm); female 24 in (61 cm). Adult pale morph readily identified by **black crescent on ear coverts**; the similar pale juvenile Bicolored Hawk (p. 100) has yellow cere (not greenish). Variable juvenile morphs and rare adult dark morph best recognized by **long legs and tail** and **greenish cere and facial skin**. Fairly common in Pacific lowlands, becoming uncommon up into middle elevations of Pacific slope; also uncommon on Caribbean slope; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Hunts in lower levels of mature forest, gallery forest, and second growth. Calls at dawn and dusk from high perch with a loud, nasal *owh!*, somewhat like note of Laughing Falcon.

Barred Forest-Falcon *Micrastur ruficollis*

Male 13 in (33 cm); female 15 in (38 cm). **Finely barred underparts** distinguish adult from all but Tiny Hawk (p. 100), but note **yellow orbital skin** and lack of a dark crown. Underparts of juvenile vary from white to buff; the extent of barring also varies, from none to heavy (unbarred individuals resemble juvenile Bicolored Hawk [p. 100], but note yellow orbital skin); juvenile often with buffy nuchal collar. Uncommon at middle elevations and in highlands; to 9,200 ft (2,800 m); rare in wet lowlands. Ambushes small vertebrate prey from low perches in mature forest, advanced second growth, and forest edge; also takes large insects, particularly at army-ant raids. Calls at dawn and dusk from high, concealed perch with a repetitious, barking *ehr!*

Slaty-backed Forest-Falcon *Micrastur mirandollei*

Male 16 in (41 cm); female 18 in (46 cm). Adult told apart from juvenile Bicolored Hawk (p. 100) by **yellow orbital skin**. Juvenile has broad scalloping on underparts. Rare in Caribbean lowlands, also reported from Bijagua de Upala; to 2,500 ft (750 m). Ambushes vertebrate prey from low perches in mature wet forest and advanced second growth. From perch in lower canopy, calls at dawn and dusk with a series of about a dozen *haaah* notes that rise slightly in pitch and volume.

Barn-Owls

TYTONIDAE. The members of this small family of owls are distinguished by their heart-shaped facial disks and fully feathered, long legs. The familiar Barn Owl is cosmopolitan, with at least one of its twenty-nine subspecies present on every continent except Antarctica.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

16 in (41 cm). The facial disk is unique; CR's palest owl, but some individuals are quite buffy on face and underparts. Fairly common and widespread; to 5,900 ft (1,800 m). Forages for rodents by flying low over fields and marshes; prefers low perches (e.g., fence posts) at night, sometimes active at dusk and dawn. Gives a harsh shriek: *khaaaaa.*

Owls

STRIGIDAE. Owls are characterized by stout bodies, rounded heads, round facial disks, and large, forward-facing eyes. All CR species have relatively short tails and are somewhat cryptically colored in shades of brown with a variety of mottled and streaked patterns. Chiefly nocturnal predators, owls are renowned for their ability to hunt by sound and sight in the dark of night. At least two species can be found in almost any given CR habitat below timberline. Vocalizations are extremely helpful in detection and identification.

Striped Owl *Pseudoscops clamator*

15 in (38 cm). Has **heavily streaked underparts** and **long ear tufts**; the white facial disk is bordered by black. Fairly common in central Pacific lowlands, especially near oil palm plantations; uncommon elsewhere in mapped range; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Favors open areas, often seen perched on utility wires; nests and roosts on or near ground. Makes a nasal, high-pitched *heeAHhh* that rises and falls.

Barred Forest-Falcon

Slaty-backed Forest-Falcon

Barn Owl

Striped Owl

Crested Owl *Lophostrix cristata*

16 in (41 cm). The conspicuous **white stripe** (buffy on some individuals) **from the tip of the long ear tufts to the base of the bill** is diagnostic. Widespread but generally uncommon; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Roosts and hunts at low to middle levels of forest and adjacent tall second growth; also at forest edge. Call is a deep, guttural *wk-wk-wuUUuurr.*

Spectacled Owl *Pulsatrix perspicillata*

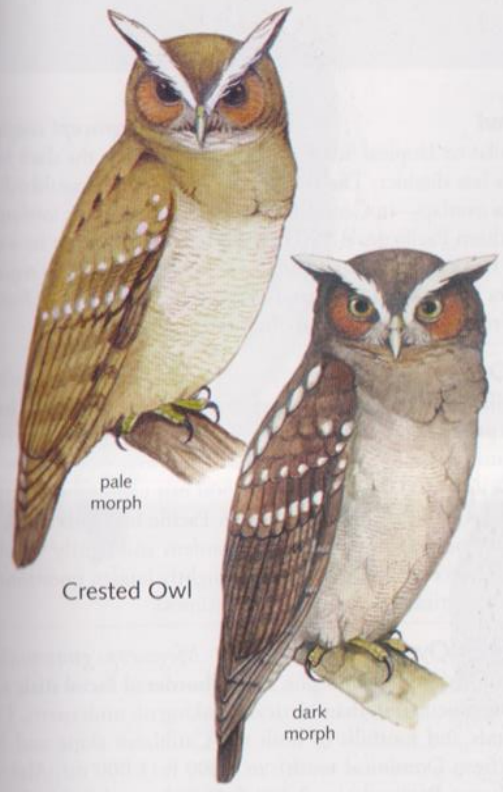
19 in (48 cm). A large owl without ear tufts; the **white X pattern on face** is distinctive. Birds from northern Pacific often show barring on buffy underparts. Fairly common and widespread; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Roosts fairly low in trees, typically near wooded streams. Call is a series of about six deep, muffled, chuckling notes that sounds like a large sheet of tin being shaken.

Mottled Owl *Ciccaba virgata*

13 in (33 cm). Has round head (no ear tufts), mottled dark-brown breast, and a streaked belly. Note **brown iris**. Fairly common and widespread; to 7,200 ft (2,200 m). Forages at middle levels of forest, tall second growth, and forest edge; roosts fairly low in dense vegetation. Calls with deep, muffled notes followed by two loud notes and an additional muffled note: *whu, whu, WHUU, WHUU, whu.*

Black-and-white Owl *Ciccaba nigrolineata*

15 in (38 cm). The only CR owl that has **black-and-white barring on underparts**. Fairly common in wet lowlands, rare in dry forest and middle elevations; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Forages at forest edge and in gardens, often near street lamps; roosts in lower and middle levels of large trees. Gives an ascending series of deep chuckling notes: *hwa, hwa, hwa, hwa, hwa, HWUU!*



Crested Owl

Spectacled Owl

Mottled Owl

Black-and-white Owl

Pacific Screech-Owl *Megascops cooperi*

9 in (23 cm). Very similar to Tropical Screech-Owl, but note that the dark border of the facial disk is less distinct. The two species are best distinguished by voice where their ranges overlap—in Central Valley and central Pacific lowlands. Fairly common in northern Pacific, to 3,300 ft (1,000 m); uncommon in western Central Valley and rare east to Cartago; also reported in Caño Negro region. Hunts from low perches in forest, gardens, and open areas. Gives a short *hup* in a fast-paced series that rises then falls abruptly in pitch and tempo.

Tropical Screech-Owl *Megascops choliba*

9 in (23 cm). Very similar to Pacific Screech-Owl, but note **distinct black border of facial disk** (also present on rare rufous morph Tropical Screech-Owl [not illustrated]). Fairly common in Central Valley and intermontane valleys of southern Pacific, from 1,600 to 4,900 ft (500 to 1,500 m); uncommon to rare in Tilarán Cordillera (to 4,300 ft [1,300 m]) and in Pacific lowlands south of Orotina. Hunts from low perches in trees, in both gardens and lightly wooded areas. Gives a bubbly, one-second trill followed by a slightly louder, questioning *POO!?* (this last note is sometimes given two or three times).

Vermiculated Screech-Owl *Megascops guatemalae*

8 in (20 cm). In both rufous and gray morphs, has **unbordered facial disk** and shows more horizontal vermiculation than vertical streaking on underparts. Uncommon in wet lowlands and foothills of both the Caribbean slope and the southern Pacific slope (from Dominical south); to 3,300 ft (1,000 m). Also reported from hills of Nicoya Peninsula; to 3,300 ft (1,000 m). Inhabits lower levels of forest and advanced second growth. Makes a soft, crescendoing trill that lasts about ten seconds; easily mistaken for a marine toad's call.

Bare-shanked Screech-Owl *Megascops clarkii*

10 in (25 cm). **Bright-tawny facial disk lacks distinct rim.** Fairly common in middle elevations and highlands; from 3,000 ft (900 m) to timberline. Forages at forest edge and in forest canopy. Toots an evenly spaced *whu, whu, whu, whu,* with either second or third note emphasized. **Ranges from CR to northwestern Colombia.**

[The three CR pygmy-owl species below are quite similar in appearance, but have slightly different vocalizations and little range overlap.]

Costa Rican Pygmy-Owl *Glaucidium costaricanum*
6 in (15 cm). Shows **white dots on brown crown** and **barring on sides of breast**; has both brown and rufous morphs. A fairly common inhabitant of Central and Talamanca Cordilleras; from about 3,900 ft (1,200 m) to timberline; rare in highest parts of Monteverde area. Active day and night in middle and upper levels of highland oak forest and forest edge. Delivers a lengthy series of even notes, usually in couplets: *hao hao, hao hao, hao hao*. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Central American Pygmy-Owl *Glaucidium griseiceps*
6 in (15 cm). Note **grayish crown with white dots**, streaked belly, and absence of barring on flanks. Uncommon in wet Caribbean lowlands and foothills; to 2,600 ft (800 m). Active day and night in lower and middle levels of mature forest, forest edge, and gardens. Whistles two to ten clear, even notes that are faster and less labored than those of the far more common Stripe-breasted Wren (p. 278).

Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl *Glaucidium brasilianum*
6 in (15 cm). Note **crown with short, light streaks**. Overall color varies from brown to rufous. Common in lowlands and foothills of northern Pacific and western Central Valley, rarer east of San José to Turrialba and south of Jacó to Dominical; to 7,200 ft (2,200 m). Active day and night in lower and middle levels of forest edge and gardens. Gives a monotone series of rather staccato toots.

Unspotted Saw-whet Owl *Aegolius ridgwayi*
7 in (18 cm). The only **small** CR owl with **no barring or streaking below**. Rare in Central and Talamanca Cordilleras; from 8,200 ft (2,500 m) to timberline. Inhabits oak forest and park-like pastures. Pipes a series of even toots, reminiscent of Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl.

Costa Rican
Pygmy-Owl

Central American
Pygmy-Owl

Ferruginous
Pygmy-Owl

Unspotted
Saw-whet Owl

Potoos

NYCTIBIIDAE. A Neotropical family of nocturnal birds that resemble nightjars (p. 126), but differ in that they perch upright, both while roosting and hunting. Distinguishing between CR species can be very difficult without hearing vocalizations.

Great Potoo *Nyctibius grandis*

20 in (51 cm). More than twice the bulk of the other two CR species; also note large head uniformly mottled with brown and buff and **lacking any obvious markings**. Has a dark iris, but in a beam of light reflects bright orange-yellow eye-shine, as does the Common Potoo. Uncommon in wet lowlands of Caribbean slope as well as Osa Peninsula and Golfo Dulce area; to 2,000 ft (600 m). On day roosts, typically perches crosswise on a high limb inside mature forest or at forest edge; at night, sallies for flying insects from high, exposed perch. Gives a loud, throaty *WAAAAuur* that falls off slightly at the end; also makes a quick, hollow *WAU!* Most often heard on moonlit nights.

Common Potoo *Nyctibius griseus*

15 in (38 cm). Virtually identical to Northern Potoo in appearance and habits—separable only by voice. Similar to Great Potoo, but with a **pale cheek stripe bordered below by a dark malar stripe**. Has a yellow iris and in a beam of light reflects bright orange-yellow eye-shine, as does the Great Potoo. Fairly-common in lowlands and foothills of southern Pacific (though rare in the Carara NP area), uncommon in Caribbean lowlands and foothills; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Often perches quite low, at the tip of a more or less vertical snag (or even fence post), appearing amazingly like an extension of the perch itself (especially in cryptic pose); seems to prefer more open areas than Great Potoo. The call is a sweet and mournful, resonant, descending *KWUU-UU, KUU, KUU, kwuu, kwuu.*

Northern Potoo *Nyctibius jamaicensis*

15 in (38 cm). Virtually identical to Common Potoo in appearance and habits—**separable only by voice**. Combines the gruff, throaty sound of a Great Potoo with the cadence of the song of a Common Potoo. If no vocalization is heard, identification can be based on geographic location, but caution is urged where their ranges are in close proximity. Uncommon in northern Pacific lowlands and foothills; to 3,300 ft (1,000 m).

Oilbird

STEATORNITHIDAE. The sole member of this family is unique in being the world's only nocturnal avian frugivore. Roosts and nests colonially in caves and dark ravines; navigates using echolocation.

Oilbird *Steatornis caripensis*

18 in (46 cm). Resembles a very large nightjar (p. 126), but coloration is a **rich rufous-brown with white spots**; has red eye-shine. No CR population has yet been discovered, but regular occurrence in Monteverde (since at least 2009) between June and Sept—a time when South American populations should be nesting—hints at the possibility of a resident population. Additionally, individual records come from Cerro de la Muerte, Corcovado NP, Bijagua de Upala, and above Horquetas de Sarapiquí. Feeds at night on palm and wild avocado fruits taken in hovering flight. Emits a slow series of clicks in flight.

CAPRIMULGIDAE. Cryptically plumaged and nocturnal, the nightjars can be tough to identify. Look for white or buff markings on the wings, tail, throat, and/or nape. Vocalizations are usually the most reliable way of determining species. The members of this widespread family are found in many different habitats; all nightjars hawk flying insects. Their eyes reflect bright orange-red when a beam of light is directed at them. They day-roost either on the ground or lengthwise on horizontal branches.

Common Pauraque *Nyctidromus albicollis*

11 in (28 cm). Roosting birds can be told apart from similar nightjars by conspicuous **buff spotting on wing coverts**, **chestnut cheeks**, and absence of nuchal collar; also note long, rounded tail. When flushed, male shows **bold white stripe across primaries and white in outer tail feathers** (much less obvious in female). This is the common nightjar from lowlands to middle elevations throughout the country; to 5,600 ft (1,700 m). After dark, forages by flying up from ground in openings, especially roadsides and lawns; usually near woods, where it roosts (wonderfully camouflaged by day) in leaf litter. Whistles a slurred *kweeeuu!* often introduced by a stuttering series of *wik* notes.

Chuck-will's-widow *Antrostomus carolinensis*

12 in (30 cm). Male has white in tail (absent in female). Both sexes very similar to Rufous Nightjar, but have **grayish crown**; also resemble rare Eastern Whip-poor-will. Uncommon (or seldom detected) migrant from Oct to April, mostly in lowlands; rarely to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Known from a variety of habitats, including mature wet forest, second growth, forest edge, mangroves, and even rows of trees bordering fields; roosts primarily on low branches, but also on ground. Usually silent in CR.

Rufous Nightjar *Antrostomus rufus*

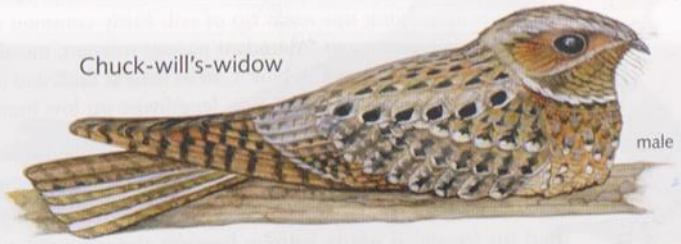
11 in (28 cm). Male has white in tail (absent in female). Both sexes very similar to the migrant Chuck-will's-widow, but have **rufous crown**; also resemble rare Eastern Whip-poor-will. Rare in lowlands and foothills; to 3,300 ft (1,000 m); found on Pacific slope from Parrita south, and on Caribbean slope from Valle de la Estrella south. Favors second growth, thickets, and forest edge; roosts on ground or low perch. Male calls from low perch with a loud *chuck, we-we-weeEo.*

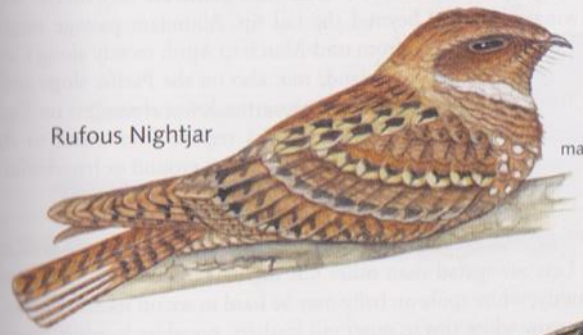
Eastern Whip-poor-will *Antrostomus vociferus*

10 in (25 cm). Resembles Chuck-will's-widow and Rufous Nightjar, but is grayer with **heavy dark streaking on center of crown**; male shows white tips to outer tail feathers (buff in female). Rare (or undetected) migrant on Pacific slope and in Central Valley, from mid-Nov to late March; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Perches low at forest edge when foraging; roosts on ground or low perch. Usually silent in CR.

Dusky Nightjar *Antrostomus saturatus*

9 in (23 cm). Little elevation overlap with other species; a dark nightjar with white tips to outer tail feathers (tips are buff in female). Fairly common on Central and Talamanca Cordilleras, from 5,900 ft (1,800 m) to just above timberline; uncommon on Tilarán Cordillera, above 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Hunts from low perch at edge of montane forest and in clearings; also prefers low perches for roosting. Whistles a somewhat slurred *whEE-per-whEE*, the last note slightly higher pitched. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**





Short-tailed Nighthawk *Lurocalis semitorquatus*

9 in (23 cm). In flight, shows no obvious field marks, but can be recognized by bat-like flight (few CR bats are as large) and decidedly **short tail**. When roosting, wing tips project beyond tip of tail. Uncommon in wet lowlands and foothills of Caribbean and southern Pacific; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Flies at treetop level over forested areas and adjacent clearings and streams, emerging at last light of day and going to roost at first light. Roosts lengthwise on branches in forest canopy. Flight call is a hard *kit-kit-kit*.

Lesser Nighthawk *Chordeiles acutipennis*

9 in (23 cm). Very similar to Common Nighthawk; in flight, the white band in the wing (buff on female) is nearer the tip and the wing tip is not as sharply pointed as in Common Nighthawk. All of these field marks are very subtle! When roosting, wing tips reach tip of tail. Fairly common resident on Pacific slope, especially near coast. Abundant passage migrant, mostly along Caribbean coast, from mid-Sept to early Nov. Can be seen at dusk and dawn foraging over open areas, often near water. Roosts lengthwise on low branches, especially in mangroves.

Common Nighthawk *Chordeiles minor*

10 in (25 cm). Very similar to Lesser Nighthawk, but in flight the white band (buff on female) is nearly halfway between the wing tip and the bend in the wing; and the wing tip is pointed. All of these field marks are very subtle! When roosting, the wingtips extend beyond the tail tip. Abundant passage migrant from early Sept to early Nov and from mid-March to April; mostly along Caribbean coast, though occurs farther inland, too; also on the Pacific slope and in the Central Valley. Uncommon breeding migrant at lower elevations on Pacific slope of Guanacaste Cordillera, and in Térraba region; from April to Aug. Comes out at dusk to feed on flying insects. Roosts on ground or lengthwise on low branches. In flight, gives a nasal *beeeznt*.

Ocellated Poorwill *Nyctiphrynus ocellatus*

8 in (20 cm). Less variegated than other CR nightjars; male very dark brown, female more ruddy; white spots on belly may be hard to see on roosting birds. In flight, shows narrow white tips to outer tail feathers; no white in wing. Status is unclear; known only from three areas in far northern central Caribbean lowlands (southeast of Brasilia de Upala, Las Crucitas, and west of Caño Negro). Inhabits young second growth adjacent to more mature forest. From ground or low perch, male sings a trilled *kwreeeo*.

White-tailed Nightjar *Hydropsalis cayennensis*

8 in (20 cm). The **buff nuchal collar** (tawny on female) is definitive. On male, underside of tail is mostly white and upperside has narrow white stripes; female has no white in tail. Uncommon on Pacific slope and apparently rare on southern Caribbean slope; to 2,600 ft (800 m). Favors open, grassy areas, where it perches on ground, both for hunting and roosting. Sings a high, thin *pik-speeeeea*, the last note rising then falling.

APODIDAE. Supreme aerialists, swifts reportedly even copulate on the wing, landing only to roost and nest in normally inaccessible places such as cliffs, hollow trees, and behind waterfalls. They fly in a more stiff-winged fashion than the superficially similar swallows and martins (p. 134) and have mostly dark undersides. Field identification can be quite difficult given the lack of obvious field marks in some species and the challenging viewing conditions under which they are often seen. Viewing can be enhanced by observing them against a dark background (e.g., trees or hillsides) rather than against a bright sky. It is helpful to note coloration of throat and rump.

Spot-fronted Swift *Cypseloides cherriei*

5 in (13 cm). Under ideal viewing conditions, shows a **white spot both in front of and behind the eye**; otherwise, virtually impossible to distinguish from the similarly shaped White-chinned Swift. Uncommon, mostly on Pacific slope from Central Valley south, but also recorded in Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí area.

Black Swift *Cypseloides niger*

7 in (18 cm). Male has a noticeably notched tail, female less so. Larger than any other CR swift—except White-collared Swift, which also shows a somewhat notched tail, but has distinctive white collar. Similarly sized, all-dark White-chinned Swift has a shorter, square tail and a squat head. Uncommon in Tilarán, Central, and Talamanca Cordilleras; descends to lower elevations to forage.

White-chinned Swift *Cypseloides cryptus*

6 in (15 cm). A relatively large, dark swift with a **squat head** and a **short, square tail**; the subtle whitish facial markings, which are diagnostic, are not likely to be seen in the field. Similarly plumaged Black Swift has a notched tail and a more elongated head. Difficult to distinguish from the similarly shaped Spot-fronted Swift, though each species has distinctive (but subtle) facial markings. Rare in highlands; occasionally descends to adjacent foothills and lowlands to forage.

Chestnut-collared Swift *Streptoprocne rutila*

5 in (13 cm). The **chestnut collar** is definitive, though birds can look entirely dark under poor viewing conditions, and most females and juveniles show little or no chestnut around the neck. Fairly common in southern Pacific intermontane valleys, uncommon elsewhere in highlands and southern Pacific lowlands, and rare in Caribbean lowlands.

White-collared Swift *Streptoprocne zonaris*

9 in (23 cm). The **large size** and obvious **white collar** facilitate identification, though in poor light it could be mistaken for a Black Swift; also, lone individuals could possibly be mistaken for a Bat Falcon (p. 112). Widespread and generally common, though uncommon in northern Pacific. Usually seen traveling and foraging in groups of a dozen or more (up to 100+), commonly with other smaller swift species.

Chimney Swift *Chaetura pelagica*

5 in (13 cm). Compared to the following three species, the Chimney Swift is more **monochromatic**; throat and rump show little contrast with rest of body. Common passage migrant on Caribbean slope from late Aug to early Nov and from mid-March to late April; mostly along the coast, but occasionally to 3,300 ft (1,000 m). In migration, displays a unidirectional flight pattern that sets it apart from other CR swifts, none of which are migratory.

Vaux's Swift *Chaetura vauxi*

4 in (10 cm). The **throat is clearly paler than the lower underparts**; the rump is also paler than rest of upperparts, but with less contrast than in Costa Rican and Gray-rumped Swifts. Fairly common in middle elevations and highlands; from 2,000 to 7,200 ft (600 to 2,200 m); occasionally reaches adjacent lowlands. Usually seen in pairs or small groups.

Costa Rican Swift *Chaetura fumosa*

4 in (10 cm). The obvious **pale rump patch** is the defining field mark (no range overlap with Gray-rumped Swift); also note decidedly pale throat. Vaux's Swift has pale rump, but it is less distinct than on Costa Rican and Gray-rumped Swifts. Common in southern Pacific lowlands and foothills; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Often forages in groups of six or more. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Gray-rumped Swift *Chaetura cinereiventris*

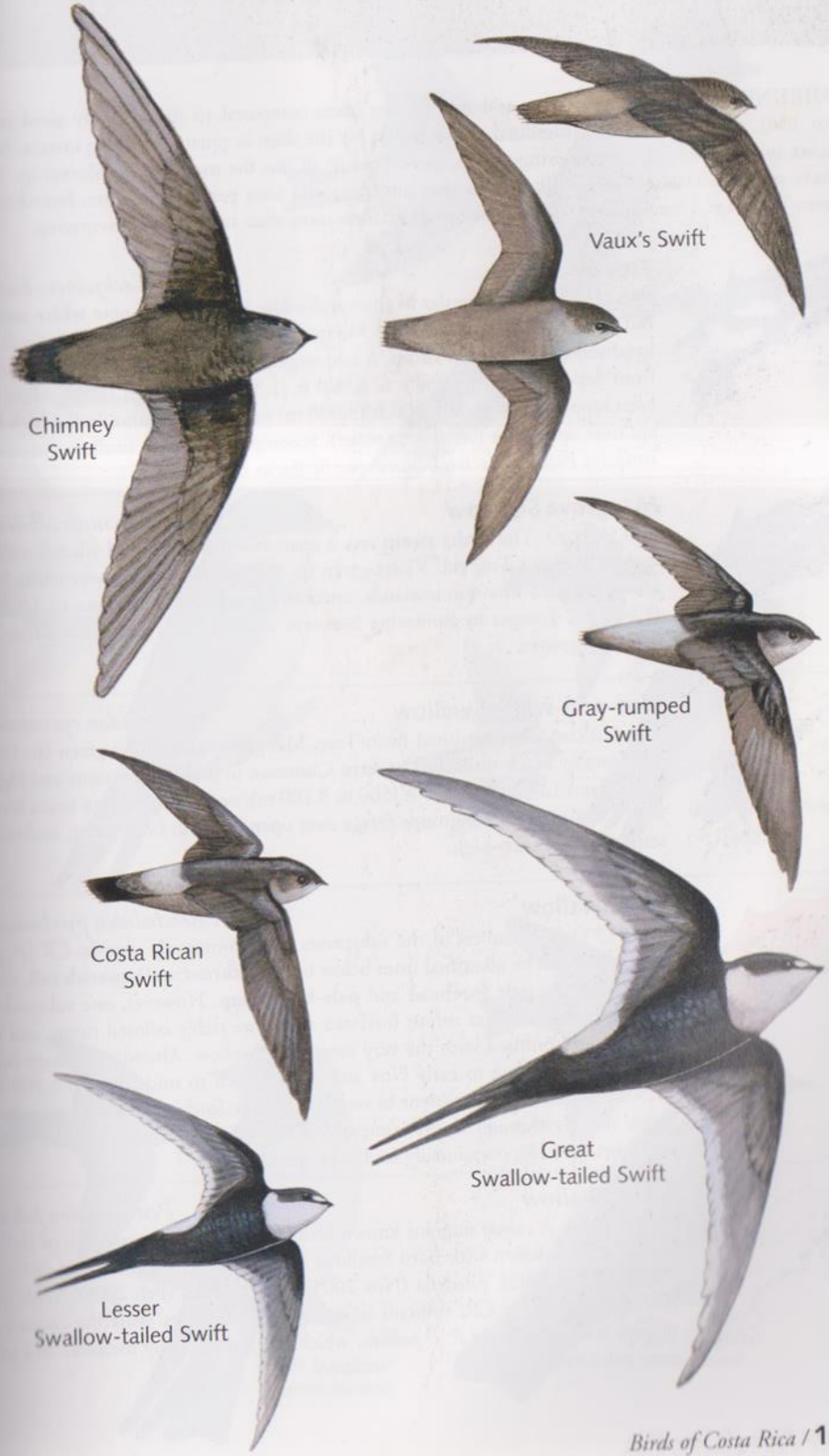
4 in (10 cm). Nearly identical to Costa Rican Swift (no range overlap), but with slightly larger **pale rump patch**. Vaux's Swift has pale rump, but it is less distinct than on Gray-rumped and Costa Rican Swifts. Common in Caribbean lowlands; to 2,000 ft (600 m). Often forages in groups of a dozen or more.

Lesser Swallow-tailed Swift *Panyptila cayennensis*

5 in (13 cm). Slender build; **long, pointed tail** and **striking, contrasting pattern** all help in identification. Note that the forked tail is normally held closed in flight. In pattern and shape, virtually identical to Great Swallow-tailed Swift, but that species is much larger and generally does not occur in CR. Fairly common in wet lowlands and foothills of both Pacific and Caribbean slopes, rare in Central Valley; to 3,300 ft (1,000 m). Usually seen singly or in pairs, seldom found in groups of more than six; typically accompanies other swift species.

Great Swallow-tailed Swift *Panyptila sanctihieronymi*

8 in (20 cm). Virtually identical to Lesser Swallow-tailed Swift in shape and color pattern, but nearly twice the length and more than double the bulk. In other words, size is the only distinguishing feature, so caution is urged. A casual wanderer from northern Central America; known only from a handful of sight reports from Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí, Tortuguero NP, and San Isidro de El General (dates uncited).



HIRUNDINIDAE. The swallows and martins are often compared to the similarly sized swifts (p. 130), another group of streamlined aerialists that ply the skies in pursuit of flying insects. Swallows and martins have deeper wingstrokes, however, and all but the male Purple Martin (p. 136) have paler undersides. And, unlike swifts, they are frequently seen perched on wires, branches, or even buildings. Unendowed vocalists, most produce little more than high-pitched twittering.

Tree Swallow *Tachycineta bicolor*

6 in (15 cm). Very similar to Blue-and-white Swallow, but note **white undertail coverts**. Distinguished from Mangrove and Violet-green (p. 138) Swallows by **absence of white on rump**. A rare migrant (though in some years irruptive) from Sept to April; generally to 4,900 ft (1,500 m), though in migration has been reported as high as 9,800 ft (3,000 m) on Barva Volcano. Individuals forage over open areas (often near water), accompanying other swallows, except in irruptive years, when large monospecific flocks can occur.

Mangrove Swallow *Tachycineta albilinea*

5 in (13 cm). The **white rump** sets it apart from the Blue-and-white Swallow and the migrant Tree and Violet-green (p. 138) Swallows; also note **white line above lore**. Common in lowlands, uncommon at higher elevations; to 3,300 ft (1,000 m). Forages by skimming low over water surfaces and fields, often far from mangroves.

Blue-and-white Swallow *Pygochelidon cyanoleuca*

4 in (10 cm). Distinguished from Tree, Mangrove, and Violet-green (p. 138) Swallows by **black undertail coverts**. Common in middle elevations and highlands, from 1,600 to 10,200 ft (500 to 3,100 m); occasionally down to sea level, as at Dominical. Small groups forage over open areas, in both urban and rural settings; often fairly high.

Cliff Swallow *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*

5 in (13 cm). Members of the subspecies most commonly seen in CR (*P. p. pyrrhonota*) can be identified from below by **dark throat** and **squarish tail**, and from above by **pale forehead** and **pale-buff rump**. However, one subspecies (*P. p. melanogaster*) has rufous forehead and more richly colored rump, and is thus readily confused with the very rare Cave Swallow. Abundant passage migrant from mid-Aug to early Nov and from March to mid-May, to 4,900 ft (1,500 m); rare winter resident in northern Pacific lowlands. Passage migrants move steadily through in the company of Bank Swallows (p. 136) and Barn Swallows (p. 138); occasionally feed over open areas.

Cave Swallow *Petrochelidon fulva*

5 in (13 cm). A casual migrant known from a few recent reports, each of individuals in association with Barn Swallows (p. 138), at Abangaritos (Jan 2002), Chomes (Feb 2002), Filadefia (Nov 2005), and Tárcoles (Feb 2008). With so few sight reports in CR, difficult to say which subspecies visits the country, though it is most likely *P. f. pallida*, which has a pale-tawny forehead and an even paler throat.

Purple Martin *Progne subis*

8 in (20 cm). Male—the only CR swallow or martin with dark underparts—could be mistaken for a swift (p. 130), but in good light shows **shiny blue-black plumage**. Female resembles Gray-breasted Martin, but has **grayish forehead and nape**. Passage migrants fairly common in Caribbean lowlands (though mostly along coast), rare in Central Valley and on Pacific slope, from mid-Aug to mid-Oct and from Feb to April. Migrating flocks often fly higher than other species of migrating swallows.

Gray-breasted Martin *Progne chalybea*

7 in (18 cm). Resembles female Purple Martin, but lacks gray on forehead and nape. The **dark, steely-blue upperparts** distinguish it from the Northern Rough-winged Swallow; both species have dingy underparts. Fairly common and widespread in both town and country; to 5,600 ft (1,700 m). Forages over open areas, often near water; roosts and nests in tree cavities, as well as under bridges and in open-ended iron beams of buildings (e.g., gas and bus stations).

Brown-chested Martin *Progne tapera*

7 in (18 cm). Like a Bank Swallow in color and pattern, but larger. Casual South American migrant, with one report of nine individuals from Golfito area (early Oct 2004), another report of one individual with Gray-breasted Martins near Cortés (late March 2006), and six birds seen in Palmar Sur (late Sept 2012). Also several reports from San José area, but none in the last thirty years. Forages over open areas, accompanying other swallows and martins.

Bank Swallow *Riparia riparia*

5 in (13 cm). The gray-brown upperparts and white underparts with a **gray-brown breast band** separate it from all but the larger, casual Brown-chested Martin. An abundant passage migrant; from mid-Aug to early Nov, generally along coasts, but also elsewhere; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m); from March to mid-May, mostly along coasts. Casual winter resident. Passage migrants move steadily through, accompanying Barn (p. 138) and Cliff Swallows (p. 134); occasionally feed over open areas.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow *Stelgidopteryx serripennis*

5 in (13 cm). Differentiated from Southern Rough-winged Swallow by **uniformly gray-brown back and rump** and dingy throat and breast (throat sometimes with buffy wash). Similar but larger Gray-breasted Martin has steely-blue upperparts. Fairly common resident in northern half of country; to 5,900 ft (1,800 m). From late Aug to early May, migrants are common in Pacific lowlands and uncommon in Caribbean lowlands. Pairs or small groups of resident birds forage over open areas, usually quite low; migrants often congregate in groups of twenty or more.

Southern Rough-winged Swallow *Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*

5 in (13 cm). The **pale rump that contrasts with the brown back** distinguishes this bird from Northern Rough-winged Swallow; also note **cinnamon throat**. Fairly common resident on Caribbean slope (to 3,300 ft [1,000 m]) and on southern Pacific slope (to 5,900 ft [1,800 m]); can occur in Central Valley and northern Pacific lowlands from Aug to Feb (after breeding). Pairs or small groups forage over open areas, frequently near water.

Swallows

Violet-green Swallow *Tachycineta thalassina*

5 in (13 cm). Resembles Tree, Mangrove, and Blue-and-white Swallows (p. 134), but note **white extending onto sides of rump**; also note white on side of face. Casual migrant from Nov to March, with scattered reports countrywide. Forages fairly high in the air, usually in the company of other swallows.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

5 in (13 cm). **Long, forked tail** is distinctive; also note **uniformly dark-blue upperparts**, white subterminal tail markings, and rufous forehead (paler on juvenile). Juvenile and molting birds don't have the characteristic long tail, but show a distinct notch. Juvenile has whitish underparts. Abundant and widespread migrant from early Aug to early June; rarely to 9,800 ft (3,000 m). In migration, occurs virtually everywhere, with largest numbers flying low along coasts (often with Cliff [p. 134] and Bank [p. 136] Swallows); winter residents prefer open fields.

Hummingbirds

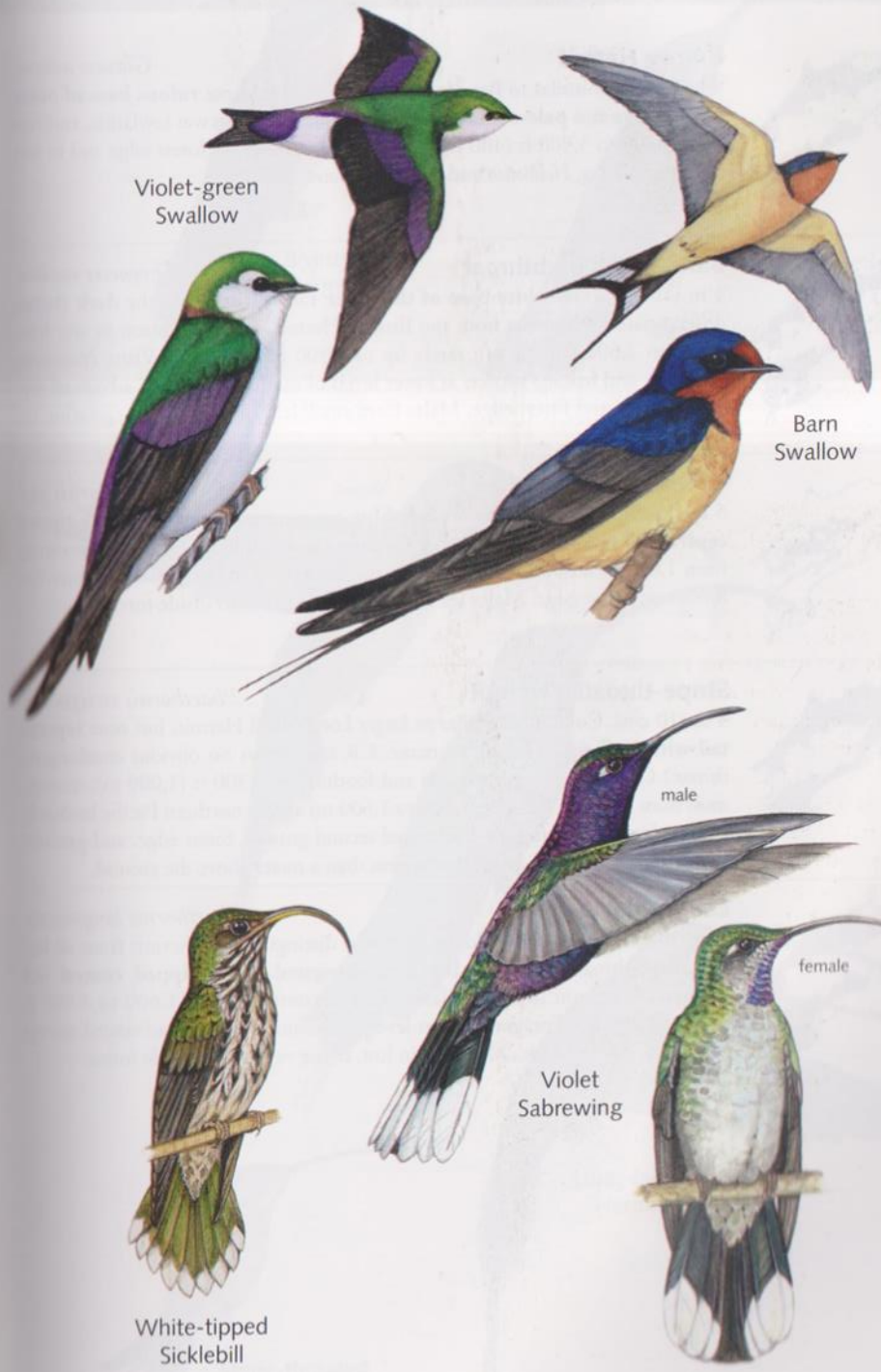
TROCHILIDAE. As many of their common names imply (e.g., emerald, goldentail, mountain-gem), hummingbirds are veritable avian jewels. These birds have a number of evolutionary adaptations for feeding on flower nectar, the most notable of which is their unique ability to hover and fly backward, indeed in any direction. Bill shape and size influence their feeding behavior and are also important features for identification. The brilliant iridescent colors displayed by many species, particularly among males, are the result of feather structure (vs. pigmentation) and are only visible from certain angles. Males of many species are quite vocal, though most produce little more than a monotonous series of thin, high-pitched notes. In a number of species, especially the hermits, groups of males (up to twenty or more at some sites) gather to sing for the purpose of attracting females. In these assemblages, known as *leks*, individual males are usually spaced apart by a meter or more (and can be frustratingly difficult to see amid the vegetation). Although hummingbirds are found in virtually every habitat in CR, the greatest species diversity occurs at middle elevations.

White-tipped Sicklebill *Eutoxeres aquila*

5 in (13 cm). Has an **extremely decurved bill** and is the only CR hummer with **streaked underparts**. Uncommon in Caribbean foothills and adjacent lowlands and in southern Pacific; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Feeds primarily on *Heliconia* flowers in lower levels of mature wet forest, advanced second growth, and forest edge; perches on inflorescence while feeding.

Violet Sabrewing *Campylopterus hemileucurus*

6 in (15 cm). Male is unmistakable with its **glittering-violet** hues and large **white tips on outer tail feathers**. Female is less distinctive, but readily recognized by **decurved bill, violet throat**, and **white in tail**. Common at middle elevations, from 3,300 to 7,900 ft (1,000 to 2,400 m); some descend to lower elevations from Nov to April, occasionally even to sea level. Found at lower levels of mature wet forest, often at openings and forest edge. Males lek in low, dense vegetation inside forest.



Bronzy Hermit *Glaucis aeneus*

4 in (10 cm). Similar to Band-tailed Barbthroat, but note **rufous base of outer tail feathers** and **pale-cinnamon throat**. Uncommon in wet lowlands, and rare from 1,300 to 3,900 ft (400 to 1,200 m). Forages low at forest edge and in wet thickets, visiting *Heliconia* and banana flowers.

Band-tailed Barbthroat *Threnetes ruckeri*

4 in (10 cm). The **white base of the outer tail feathers** and the **dark throat** differentiate this species from the Bronzy Hermit. Fairly common in wet lowlands, to 2,600 ft (800 m); rarely up to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Visits *Heliconia*, *Calathea*, and banana flowers at lower levels of mature wet forest, advanced second growth, and forest edge. Males form small leks in low, dense vegetation inside forest.

Green Hermit *Phaethornis guy*

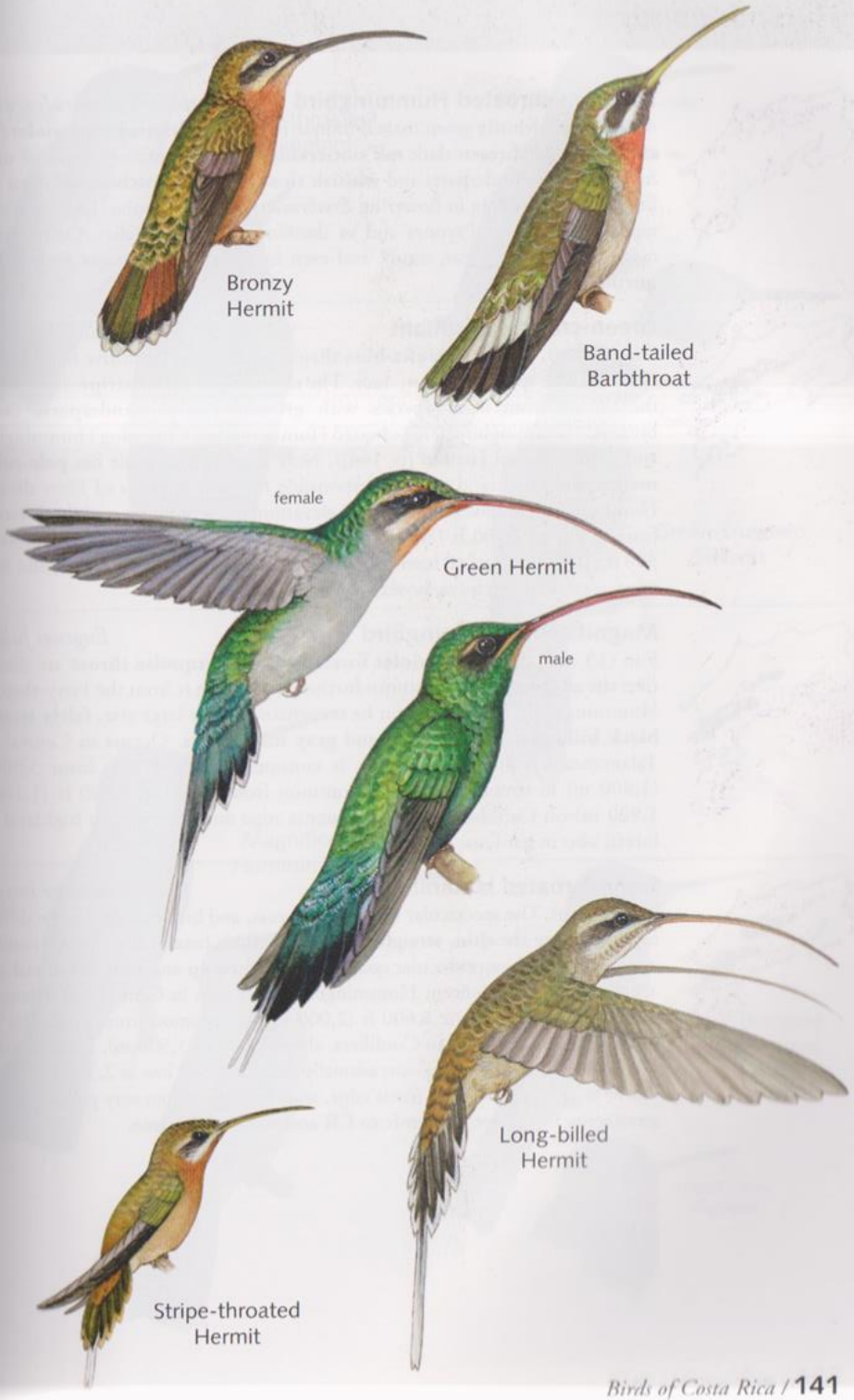
6 in (15 cm). Combination of **dark blue-green upperparts** and **white-tipped central tail feathers** is diagnostic. Common in foothills and middle elevations from 1,600 to 6,600 ft (500 to 2,000 m). Forages in lower levels of mature wet forest and forest edge. Males lek in low, dense vegetation inside forest.

Stripe-throated Hermit *Phaethornis striigularis*

4 in (10 cm). Coloration similar to larger Long-billed Hermit, but note **tapered tail with buff tip**. (Despite its name, CR race shows no obvious streaking on throat.) Common in wet lowlands and foothills, to 3,300 ft (1,000 m); uncommon from 3,300 to 5,200 ft (1,000 to 1,600 m) and in northern Pacific lowlands. Forages low in mature forest, advanced second growth, forest edge, and gardens. Males lek inside forest, using perches less than a meter above the ground.

Long-billed Hermit *Phaethornis longirostris*

6 in (15 cm). **Brownish** coloration should distinguish this hermit from all but the Stripe-throated Hermit, but note **elongated, white-tipped central tail feathers**. Common in wet lowlands, and uncommon from 1,600 to 3,900 ft (500 to 1,200 m). Forages in lower levels of mature wet forest, advanced second growth, and forest edge. Males lek in low, dense vegetation inside forest.



Sapphire-throated Hummingbird *Lepidopyga coeruleogularis*

4 in (10 cm). Mostly green male is unique in having **glittering blue-violet from chin to upper breast**; dark **tail noticeably forked**. Female lacks facial markings, has white underparts and **whitish tips to deeply notched tail**. First confirmed in CR feeding in flowering *Erythrina* trees near Gamba (Dec 2008); also reported from near Pavones and in the Coto Colorado Valley. Often forages quite low in open areas, scrub, and even in mangroves. **Ranges from CR to northern Colombia.**

Green-crowned Brilliant *Heliodoxa jacula*

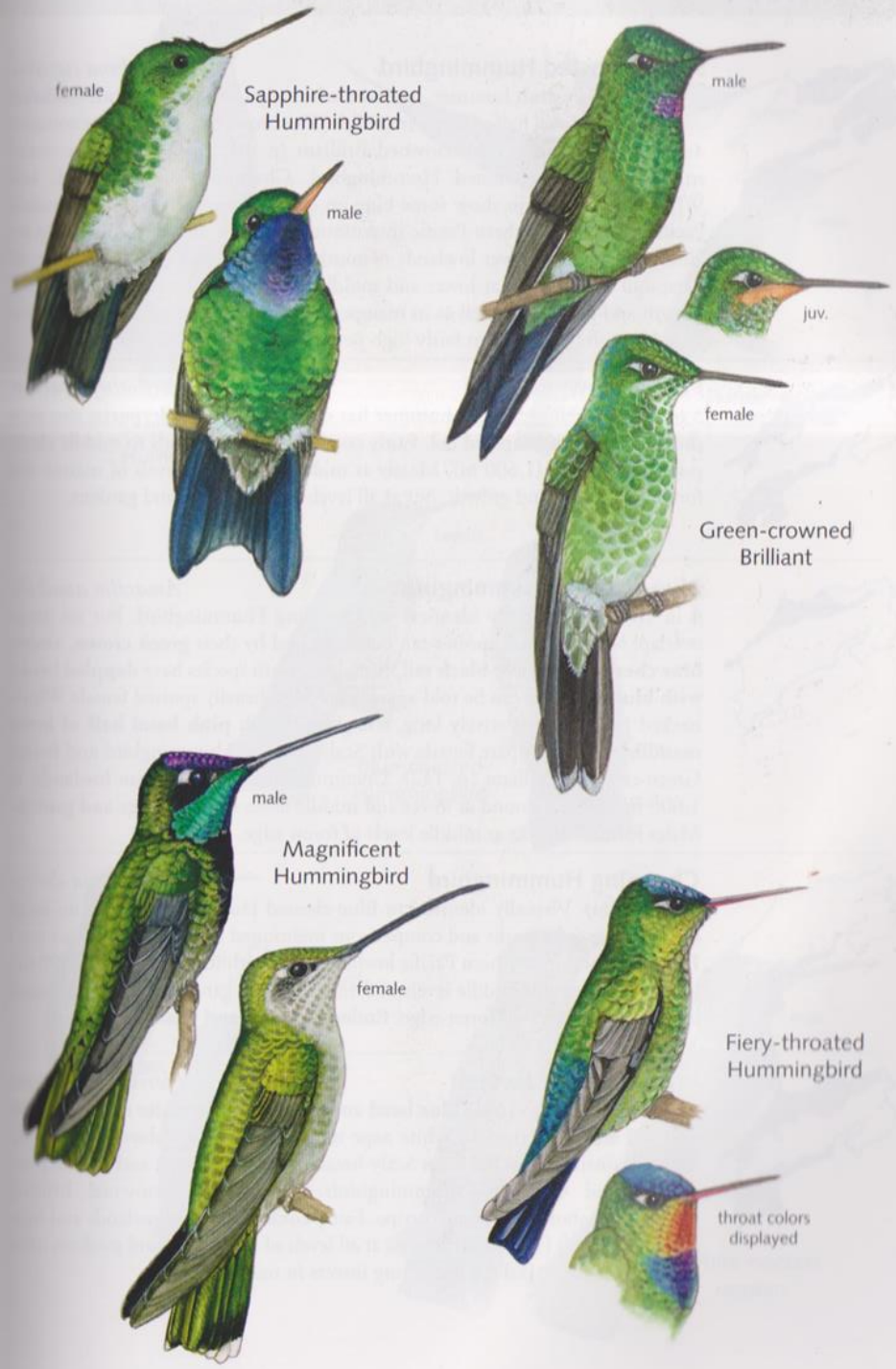
5 in (13 cm). The small **violet-blue throat patch** is the definitive field mark on the otherwise sparkling-green male. The **short white malar stripe** distinguishes the female from other species with **greenish-spotted underparts** (Scaly-breasted Hummingbird, Blue-chested Hummingbird, Charming Hummingbird, and White-necked Jacobin [p. 144]). Note that juvenile male has **pale-rufous malars and chin** (and may be responsible for many reports of Fiery-throated Hummingbird at lower than normal elevations). Common at middle elevations, from 2,300 to 7,200 ft (700 to 2,200 m); from Feb to June, occurs as low as 300 ft (100 m). Visits all levels of wet montane forest, second growth, and forest edge; prefers to perch (vs. hover) when feeding.

Magnificent Hummingbird *Eugenes fulgens*

5 in (13 cm). The male's **violet forecrown** and **turquoise throat** are distinctive; the all-green back and rump further distinguish it from the Fiery-throated Hummingbird. The female can be recognized by her large size, **fairly straight black bill, postocular stripe**, and **gray underparts**. Occurs in Central and Talamanca Cordilleras, where it is common in highlands, from 5,900 ft (1,800 m) to timberline, and uncommon from 4,300 to 5,900 ft (1,300 to 1,800 m) on Caribbean slope. Frequents edge and openings in highland oak forest, also in gardens.

Fiery-throated Hummingbird *Panterpe insignis*

4 in (10 cm). The spectacular forecrown, throat, and breast colors can be difficult to see, so note the **thin, straight bill** with pinkish basal half of lower mandible and the small white postocular spot. The **bluish rump** and **blue-black tail** set it apart from the Magnificent Hummingbird. Common in Central and Talamanca Cordilleras, mostly above 6,600 ft (2,000 m); uncommon from Miravalles Volcano south through Tilarán Cordillera, above 4,900 ft (1,500 m). From March to July—throughout its range—occasionally descends to as low as 2,300 ft (700 m). Active at all levels of forest, forest edge, and clearings. Often very pugnacious; utters a screechy sputter. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**



Scaly-breasted Hummingbird *Phaeochroa cuvierii*

5 in (13 cm). A **drab** hummer, but note **white tips to the outer tail feathers**; also note pink basal half of lower mandible. The breast does not appear conspicuously scaly. Female Green-crowned Brilliant (p. 142) has short white malar stripe; female Blue-chested Hummingbird, Charming Hummingbird, and White-necked Jacobin show some blue on chest. Common in dry and humid Pacific lowlands, southern Pacific intermontane valleys, and in Caño Negro region; uncommon in wet lowlands of southern Pacific and in Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí area. Found at lower and middle levels along forest edge, in second growth and gardens, as well as in mangroves. Male sings rather well for a hummingbird; often sings from fairly high perch in second growth and gardens.

Purple-crowned Fairy *Heliothryx barroti*

5 in (13 cm). No other CR hummer has **entirely white underparts**; also note short bill and long, tapered tail. Fairly common from lowlands to middle elevations; to 5,200 ft (1,600 m). Mostly at middle and upper levels of mature wet forest and tall second growth, but at all levels of forest edge and gardens.

Blue-chested Hummingbird *Amazilia amabilis*

4 in (10 cm). Virtually identical to Charming Hummingbird, but no range overlap. Males of both species can be recognized by their **green crown, violet-blue chest**, and **bronzy-black tail**. Females of both species have **dappled breast with bluish center**; can be told apart from more heavily spotted female White-necked Jacobin by relatively long, straight bill with **pink basal half of lower mandible**. Also compare female with Scaly-breasted Hummingbird and female Green-crowned Brilliant (p. 142). Uncommon in wet Caribbean lowlands; to 1,600 ft (500 m). Found at lower and middle levels of forest edge and gardens. Males form small leks at middle levels of forest edge.

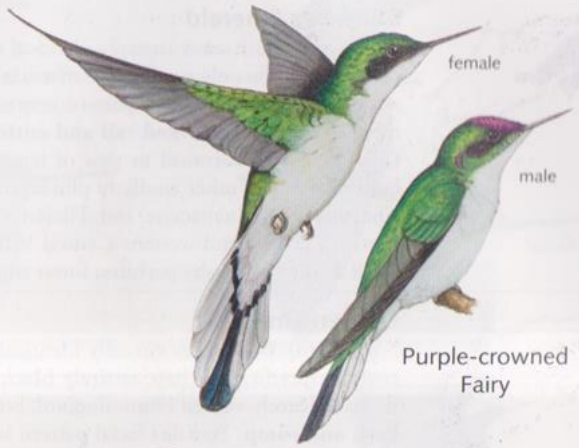
Charming Hummingbird *Amazilia decora*

4 in (10 cm). Virtually identical to Blue-chested Hummingbird, but no range overlap. (See field marks and comparisons mentioned in Blue-chested account.) Fairly common in southern Pacific lowlands and foothills; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Found at lower and middle levels of forest edge and gardens. Males form small leks at middle levels of forest edge. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

White-necked Jacobin *Florisuga mellivora*

5 in (13 cm). Male's **royal-blue head** and extensive **pure white on underparts and tail** are distinctive; the white nape sometimes does not show. Female's all-dark bill distinguishes her from Scaly-breasted Hummingbird and female Blue-chested and Charming Hummingbirds. Female Green-crowned Brilliant (p. 142) has short white malar stripe. Fairly common in wet lowlands and foothills; to 3,300 ft (1,000 m). Forages at all levels of forest edge and gardens; often seen zipping back and forth catching insects in midair.

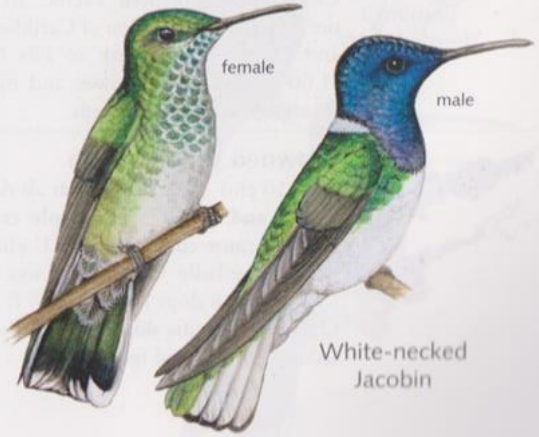
Scaly-breasted Hummingbird



Purple-crowned Fairy

Blue-chested Hummingbird

Charming Hummingbird



White-necked Jacobin

Canivet's Emerald *Chlorostilbon canivetii*

3 in (8 cm). Both sexes virtually identical to Garden Emerald (often considered conspecific); the only notable difference is bill color—**reddish lower mandible with black tip**. Male color pattern very similar to that of Steely-vented Hummingbird, but note **forked tail and entirely green back and rump**. Female's facial pattern is identical to that of female Garden Emerald; this feature sets both apart from other similarly plumaged female hummers. Common on Pacific slopes of Guanacaste and Tilarán Cordilleras, uncommon elsewhere in northern Pacific and western Central Valley; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Feeds on small flowers in brushy pastures, forest edge, and gardens.

Garden Emerald *Chlorostilbon assimilis*

3 in (8 cm). Both sexes virtually identical to Canivet's Emerald (often considered conspecific); but have **entirely black bill**. Male color pattern very similar to that of Steely-vented Hummingbird, but note **forked tail and entirely green back and rump**. Female's facial pattern is identical to that of female Canivet's Emerald; this feature sets both apart from other similarly plumaged female hummers. In southern Pacific, fairly common in intermontane valleys and uncommon elsewhere; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Also occurs on Caribbean slope in Reventazón River watershed. **Endemic to CR and Panama.**

Blue-tailed Hummingbird *Amazilia cyanura*

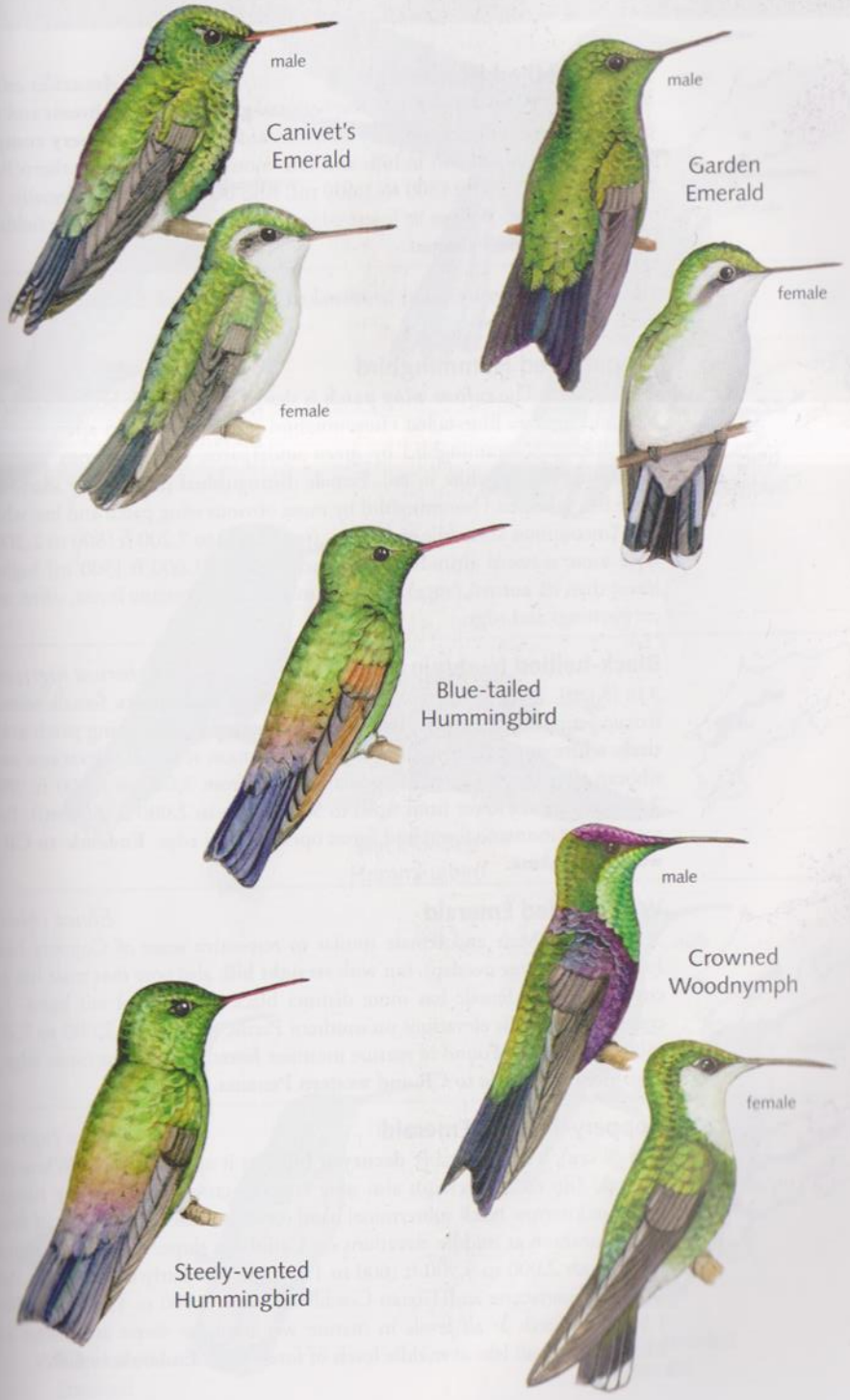
4 in (10 cm). Similar to Steely-vented Hummingbird, but with **rufous wing patch**. Distinguished from Stripe-tailed Hummingbird (p. 148), which also has rufous wing patch, by **blue tail** with no white in outer tail feathers. Status uncertain; reported from Central Valley, Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí, Monteverde, Carara NP, and Nicoya Peninsula. Feeds at lower and middle levels of forest edge and gardens.

Steely-vented Hummingbird *Amazilia saucerrottei*

4 in (10 cm). Color pattern very similar to male Canivet's and Garden Emeralds, but note **coppery rump** separating green back and steely blue tail. Common in northern Pacific; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Fairly common in northern central portion of Caribbean slope, Central Valley (east to Turrialba), and Dota region (south to Fila Costera, east of Dominical); to 5,200 ft (1,600 m). Feeds at lower and middle levels of forest openings and edge, second growth, and gardens.

Crowned Woodnymph *Thalurania colombica*

4 in (10 cm). Male can appear all-dark, but in good light shows dazzling **green throat and breast** with **purple crown, shoulders, and belly**. Female more likely to cause confusion, but **U-shaped pale-gray throat and breast** contrast with darker belly. Common in wet lowlands and foothills, to 3,000 ft (900 m) on Caribbean slope and to 3,900 ft (1,200 m) in southern Pacific; rare north of Quepos on Pacific slope. Inhabits lower and middle levels of mature wet forest, second growth, and forest edge.



Snowy-bellied Hummingbird *Amazilia edward*

4 in (10 cm). Note sharp distinction between **glittering-green breast** and **white belly**; the upper edge of the belly forms an arch. Also note **coppery rump and lower back**. Uncommon in hills and intermontane valleys of southern Pacific from 1,000 to 5,200 ft (300 to 1,600 m). Also occurs, at least seasonally, in the valley at Ujarrás. Forages at forest edge and in gardens and brushy fields. **Endemic to CR and Panama.**

[Females of *Eupherusa* could be mistaken for females of *Elvira*, but the former have rufous in the wing.]

Stripe-tailed Hummingbird *Eupherusa eximia*

4 in (10 cm). The **rufous wing patch** is shared by the Black-bellied Hummingbird and the rare Blue-tailed Hummingbird (p. 146). Male set apart from male Black-bellied Hummingbird by green underparts; set apart from Blue-tailed Hummingbird by white in tail. Female distinguished from nearly identical female Black-bellied Hummingbird by more obvious wing patch and less white in tail. Uncommon at middle elevations, from 2,600 to 7,200 ft (800 to 2,200 m); note some seasonal altitudinal movements (up to 1,600 ft [500 m] higher or lower than its normal range). Inhabits mature wet montane forest, often at forest openings and edge.

Black-bellied Hummingbird *Eupherusa nigriventris*

3 in (8 cm). Male has distinctive **black face and underparts**; female resembles female Stripe-tailed Hummingbird, but has reduced rufous wing patch and **entirely white outer three tail feathers**. Uncommon at middle elevations on Caribbean slope from Central Cordillera south, from 3,000 to 6,600 ft (900 to 2,000 m); moves lower from April to Sept (down to 2,000 ft [600 m]). Prefers mature wet montane forest and forest openings and edge. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

White-tailed Emerald *Elvira chionura*

3 in (8 cm). Male and female similar to respective sexes of Coppery-headed Emerald (no range overlap), but with **straight bill**; also note that male has green crown and that female has more distinct black subterminal tail band. Fairly common at middle elevations on southern Pacific slope; from 2,600 to 7,200 ft (800 to 2,200 m). Found in mature montane forest, as well as at forest edge and in gardens. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Coppery-headed Emerald *Elvira cupreiceps*

3 in (8 cm). The noticeably **decurved bill** sets it apart from the White-tailed Emerald (no range overlap); also note coppery crown and coppery rump (of male) and narrow black subterminal band on white outer tail feathers of female. Fairly common at middle elevations on Caribbean slope, north of Reventazón River, from 2,000 to 4,900 ft (600 to 1,500 m); also fairly common on Pacific slope of Guanacaste and Tilarán Cordilleras, from 3,900 to 4,900 ft (1,200 to 1,500 m). Feeds at all levels in mature wet montane forest and forest edge. Males form small leks at middle levels of forest edge. **Endemic to CR.**

Blue-throated Goldentail *Hylocharis eliciae*

4 in (10 cm). Could possibly recall a Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, but has **golden-green tail** and **thick, coral-red bill** with black tip. Fairly common in lowlands and foothills on Pacific slope; to 3,600 ft (1,100 m). Uncommon on Caribbean slope; to 3,000 ft (900 m). Prefers lower and middle levels of forest openings, forest edge, second growth, and gardens. Males lek from thin twigs and vines at middle levels of second growth and forest openings.

Rufous-tailed Hummingbird *Amazilia tzacatl*

4 in (10 cm). The only CR hummer that combines **rufous rump and tail** with **green breast**. Widespread; common in wet habitats, to 5,200 ft (1,600 m); but uncommon from 5,200 to 7,200 ft (1,600 to 2,200 m). Uncommon in northern Pacific lowlands. The common hummer found in most human-altered habitats; very aggressive and often engages in chases.

Cinnamon Hummingbird *Amazilia rutila*

4 in (10 cm). Dorsal coloration similar to Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, but has **entirely pale-rufous underparts**; female Purple-throated Mountain-gem (p. 154) has white postocular stripe and lacks rufous in tail. Fairly common in northern Pacific and western Central Valley; to 3,300 ft (1,000 m). Casual on Caribbean slope, where reported from Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí and Turrialba. Frequents forest edge, second growth, and gardens.

Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer *Chalybura urochrysia*

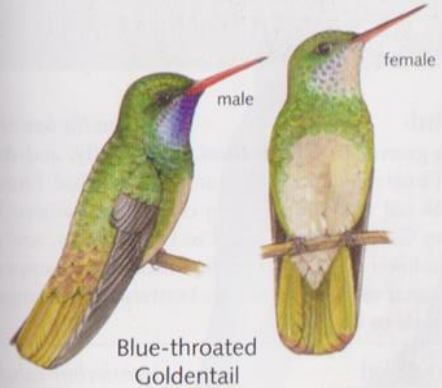
4 in (10 cm). In poor light, appears mostly dark, but note diagnostic **pinkish-red feet**. Uncommon in wet Caribbean lowlands and foothills; to 3,000 ft (900 m). Feeds in lower levels of mature wet forest, second growth, and forest edge; frequently visits *Heliconia* clumps.

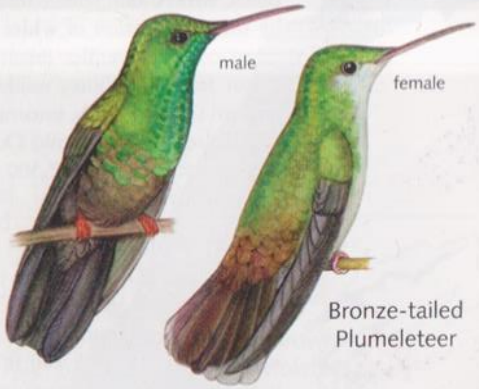
Green-breasted Mango *Anthracothorax prevostii*

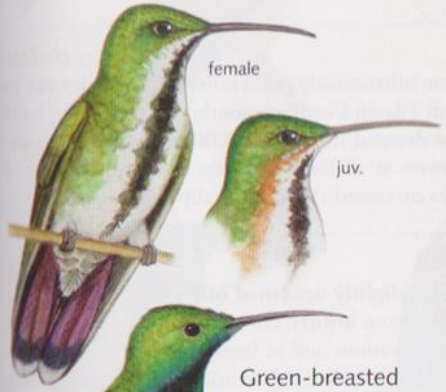
5 in (13 cm). Male potentially confused with Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, but has **black stripe down center of throat and breast (bordered by blue)**; also note maroon (not rufous) tail. Female is unique in having **dark median stripe on whitish underparts**. Fairly common in Palo Verde NP and Caño Negro regions, uncommon elsewhere in northern Pacific; also uncommon in Central Valley, Caribbean lowlands, and in central Pacific—south to about Uvita; rarely above 3,300 ft (1,000 m). Feeds at all levels of forest edge, gardens, and mangroves.

Veraguan Mango *Anthracothorax veraguensis*

5 in (13 cm). Both sexes nearly identical to Green-breasted Mango, but note **blue-green** (not black) **median stripe**. Status uncertain in CR, though has been confirmed in southern Pacific lowlands (Gamba and Coto Colorado Valley); appears to be expanding its range north from Panama.







Mangrove Hummingbird *Amazilia boucardi*

4 in (10 cm). Male's **bluish-green throat and chest, white belly**, and **dark, forked tail** are diagnostic. Female resembles very rare White-bellied Emerald (p. 379), but has mostly dark tail with bronze-green central tail feathers. Uncommon in mangroves, from Gulf of Nicoya south to Golfo Dulce, and also around Tamarindo. Forages at lower and middle levels of mangrove swamps and adjacent vegetation; prefers nectar of flowers from the buttressed Tea Mangrove (*Pelliciera rhizophorae*). **Endemic to CR.**

Ruby-throated Hummingbird *Archilochus colubris*

3 in (8 cm). Male unique—no other CR hummer combines a **red gorget** with a **black, forked tail**; female told apart from similarly plumaged female hummers by the combination of **white postocular spot, white tail corners**, and dull-green crown. Juveniles resemble female, but juvenile males show a few red throat feathers. Winter residents are fairly common in northern Pacific and western Central Valley, uncommon in Caño Negro region and southern Pacific, casual elsewhere; from mid-Oct to mid-April; mostly below 3,300 ft (1,000 m), but can occur as high as 7,500 ft (2,300 m). Favors brushy fields, second growth, and gardens.

Brown Violetear *Colibri delphinae*

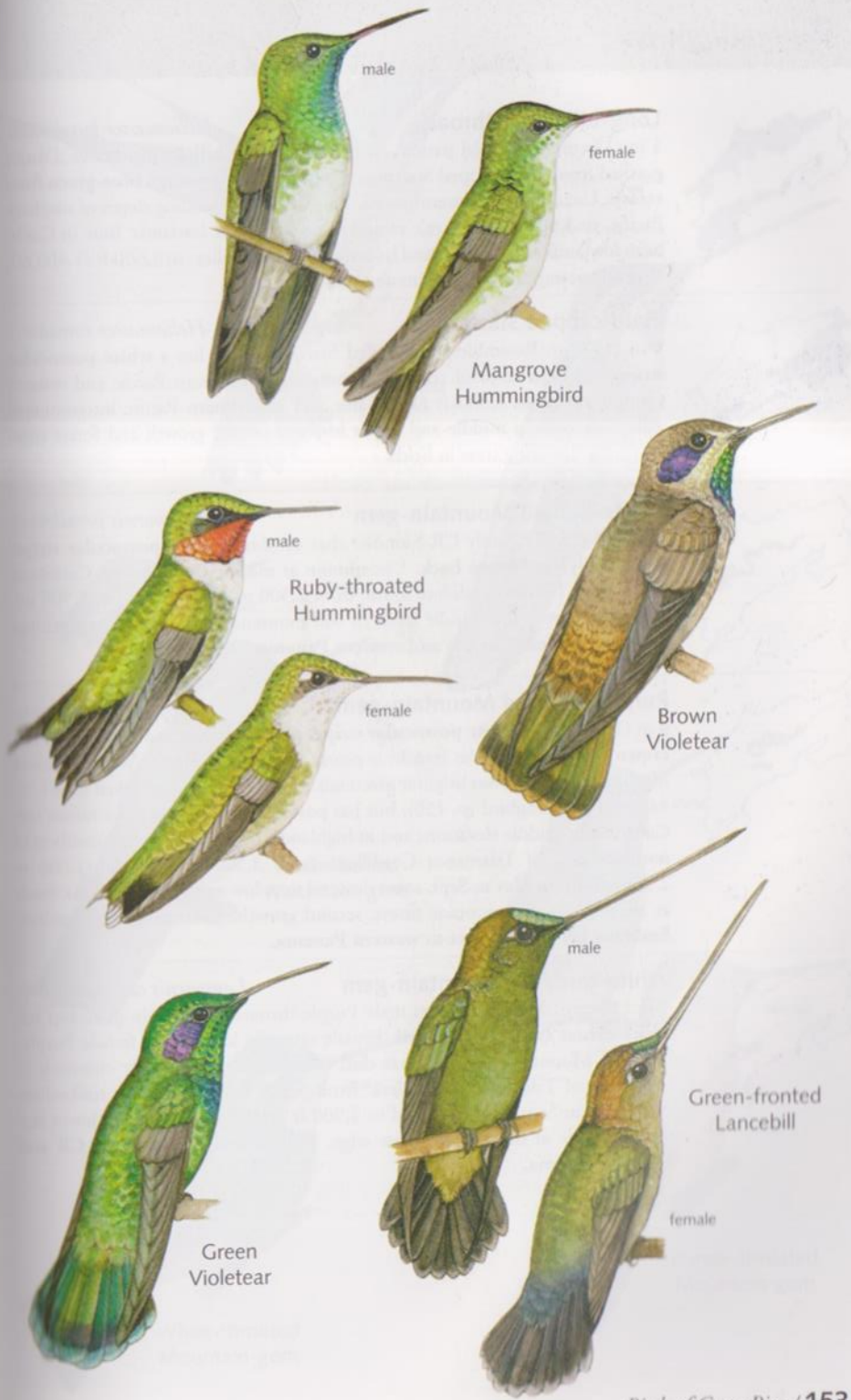
4 in (10 cm). Distinguished by **brown color** and **violet ear patch**; also note fairly short, straight bill (as compared to the bills of hermits [p. 140]). Uncommon in wet foothills and middle elevations, including hills of Osa Peninsula; from 1,300 to 5,200 ft (400 to 1,600 m). Feeds on a variety of plants with small flowers. Occurs in forest canopy; also found at all levels of forest edge and gardens.

Green Violetear *Colibri thalassinus*

4 in (10 cm). Told apart from other mostly green hummers by **violet ear patch**. Common in highlands, from Tilarán Cordillera south; from 4,600 ft (1,400 m) to timberline, though some descend to 3,000 ft (900 m) from March to Oct. Visits an assortment of flowers at all levels of forest edge and gardens. From high, exposed perches, males incessantly sing a typically two-note song.

Green-fronted Lancebill *Doryfera ludovicae*

5 in (13 cm). The **long, thin, slightly upturned bill** is the best field mark on this rather dark hummer; also note **bronzy crown** and small white postocular spot. Uncommon at middle elevations and in highlands, from Tilarán Cordillera south; from 2,600 to 7,500 ft (800 to 2,300 m). Visits clusters of hanging, pink/red epiphytic flowers (Ericaceae) at middle and upper levels of mature forest and forest edge; regularly hawks insects along mountain streams, sometimes perching on rocks in midstream between sallies.



Long-billed Starthroat *Heliomaster longirostris*

5 in (13 cm). The facial pattern and **long, straight bill** are distinctive. Distinguished from Plain-capped Starthroat by **postocular spot** and **blue-green forecrown**. Uncommon in intermontane valleys and surrounding slopes of southern Pacific, to 3,900 ft (1,200 m); rare in southern Pacific lowlands. Rare in Caribbean lowlands and foothills and in eastern Central Valley; to 4,600 ft (1,400 m). Visits flowering trees in gardens and at forest edge.

Plain-capped Starthroat *Heliomaster constantii*

5 in (13 cm). Resembles Long-billed Starthroat, but has a **white postocular stripe** and lacks colorful crown. Uncommon in northern Pacific and western Central Valley, to 3,300 ft (1,000 m); rare in southern Pacific intermontane valleys. Forages at middle and upper levels of second growth and forest edge; also visits flowering trees in fields.

White-bellied Mountain-gem *Lampornis hemileucus*

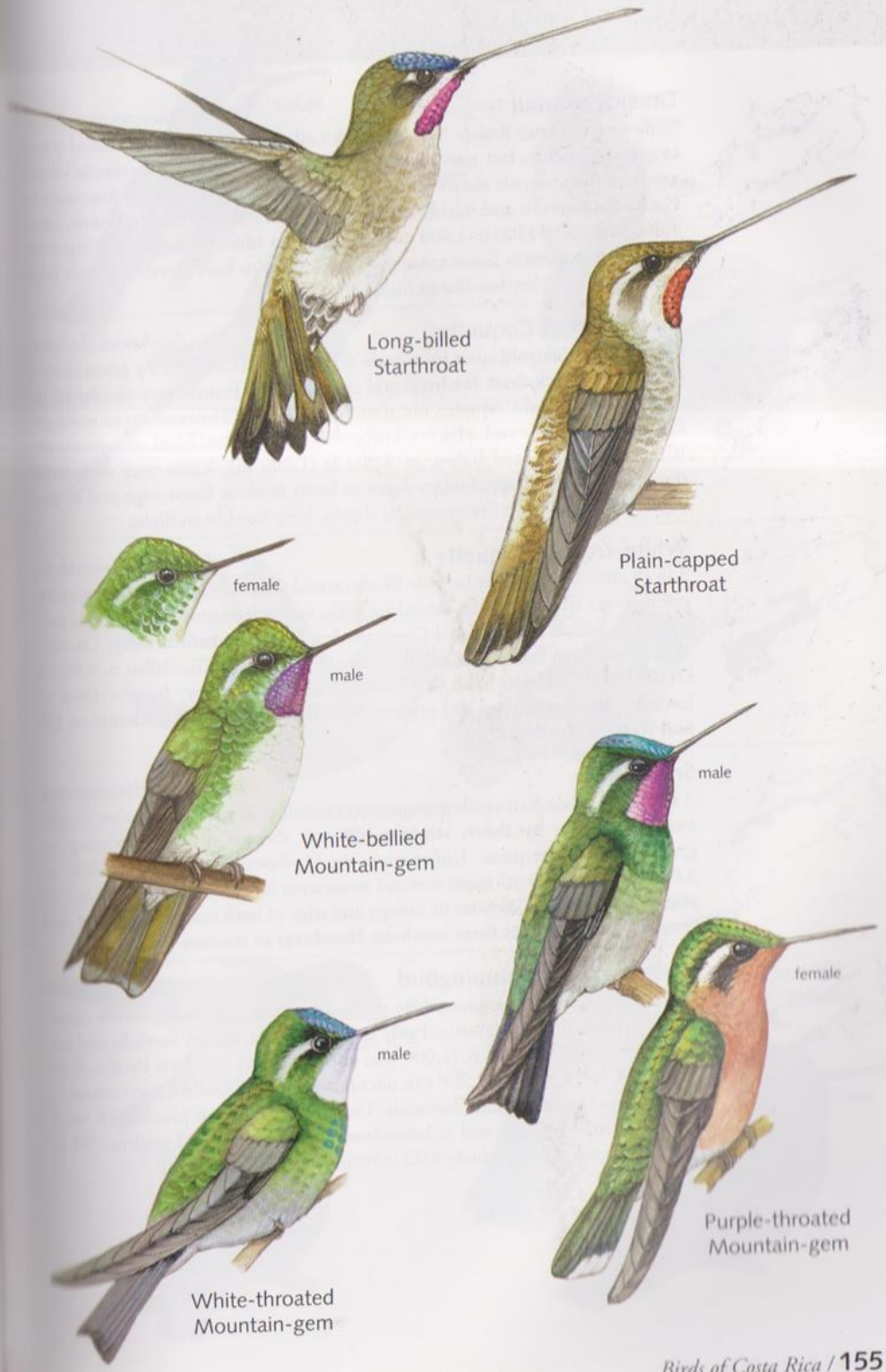
4 in (10 cm). The only CR hummer that combines **white postocular stripe, white belly**, and **green back**. Uncommon at middle elevations on Caribbean slope, from Tilarán Cordillera south; from 2,300 to 4,900 ft (700 to 1,500 m). Forages at lower and middle levels of wet montane forest, mostly at openings and edge. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Purple-throated Mountain-gem *Lampornis calolaemus*

4 in (10 cm). The **white postocular stripe, purple throat**, and **turquoise forecrown** identify the male; female is nearly identical to female White-throated Mountain-gem, but has brighter green tail. Female could be mistaken for a Cinnamon Hummingbird (p. 150), but has postocular stripe and lacks rufous tail. Common at middle elevations and in highlands, from Guanacaste Cordillera to northern end of Talamanca Cordillera; from 3,300 to 8,200 ft (1,000 to 2,500 m). From May to Sept, some descend to as low as 1,000 ft (300 m). Feeds at all levels of wet montane forest, second growth, forest edge, and gardens. **Endemic from Nicaragua to western Panama.**

White-throated Mountain-gem *Lampornis castaneoventris*

4 in (10 cm). Male similar to male Purple-throated Mountain-gem, but has **white throat** and **pale-gray tail**. Female virtually identical to female Purple-throated Mountain-gem, but has dull bronzy-green tail. Fairly common in highlands of Talamanca Cordillera, from 5,900 ft (1,800 m) to timberline; from May to Sept, some descend to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Forages at lower and middle levels of oak forest, forest edge, and gardens. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**



Green Thorntail *Discosura conversii*

Male 4 in (10 cm); female 3 in (8 cm). Small size and white rump band could suggest a coquette, but male's **long tail** and lack of crest plumes should dispel any confusion; female shows distinctive **white malar stripe**. Fairly common in Caribbean foothills and middle elevations, from Tilarán Cordillera south, from 1,300 to 5,200 ft (400 to 1,600 m); rare visitor to adjacent lowlands. Visits trees with small flowers in forest canopy; forages down to lower levels at forest edge and in gardens. Very bee-like in flight.

Black-crested Coquette *Lophornis helenae*

3 in (8 cm). Male told apart from male White-crested Coquette by green crown; **long, wiry, black crest feathers**; and spotted belly. Female very similar to female White-crested Coquette, but note **spotted belly**. Uncommon in northern Caribbean foothills and adjacent lowlands (south to watershed of Reventazón River), rare in Central Valley; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Visits trees with small flowers in forest canopy; forages down to lower levels at forest edge and in gardens, often coming to *Stachytarpheta* shrubs. Very bee-like in flight.

White-crested Coquette *Lophornis adorabilis*

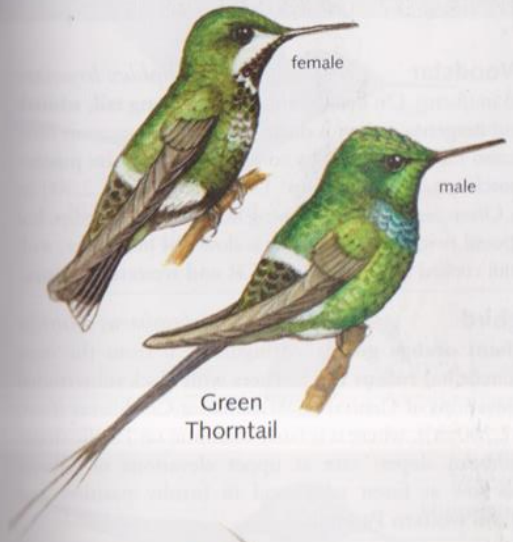
3 in (8 cm). Male similar to male Black-crested Coquette, but has **white crest**, green gorget with long tufts extending back, and pale-rufous belly. Female very similar to female Black-crested Coquette, but note **pale-rufous belly**. Uncommon in southern Pacific and rare in Central Valley, east to Turrialba; to 4,600 ft (1,400 m). Visits trees with small flowers in forest canopy; forages down to lower levels of forest edge and gardens. Very bee-like in flight. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

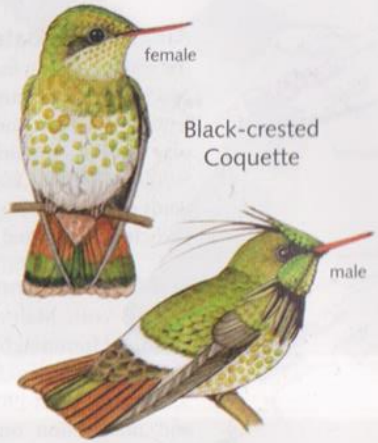
Snowcap *Microchera albocoronata*

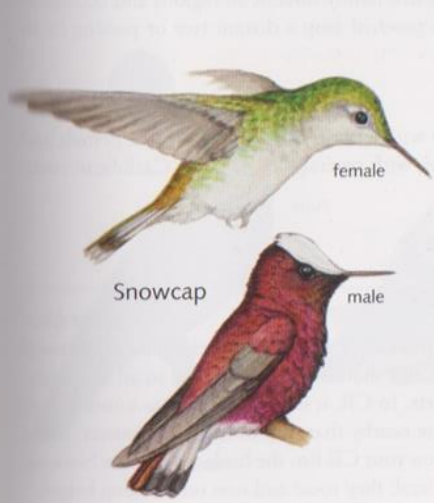
3 in (8 cm). Male is instantly recognizable; female told apart from other similar female hummers by **short, straight bill** and absence of green spotting on grayish-white underparts. Uncommon on Caribbean slope, from 1,000 to 3,000 ft (300 to 900 m); some descend to adjacent lowlands during latter half of year. Forages on small flowers in canopy and edge of both mature wet forest and second growth. **Ranges from southern Honduras to western Panama.**

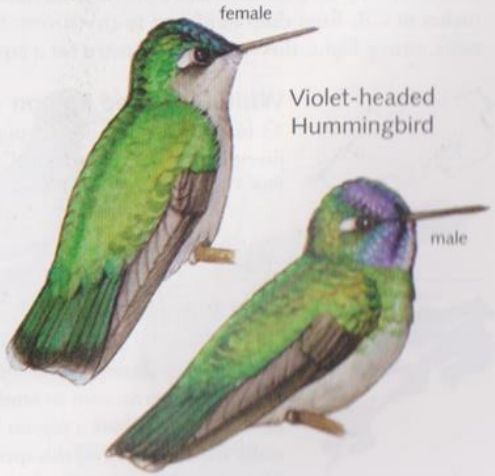
Violet-headed Hummingbird *Klais guimeti*

3 in (8 cm). The conspicuous **white postocular spot** and **violet crown** (more bluish in female) are diagnostic. Fairly common in Caribbean foothills and adjacent lowlands, to 3,300 ft (1,000 m); uncommon in southern Pacific, from 1,000 to 3,900 ft (300 to 1,200 m); uncommon around Golfo Dulce; casual in northern and central Pacific lowlands. Feeds on a variety of plants with small flowers, in forest canopy and at lower levels of forest edge and gardens. When foraging, flies slowly with body held horizontal and tail cocked up.









Hummingbirds

Magenta-throated Woodstar *Calliphlox bryantae*

Male 4 in (10 cm); female 3 in (8 cm). On male, combination of **long tail, whitish patch on side of rump**, and **magenta gorget** is distinctive. Female set apart from female Scintillant and Volcano Hummingbirds by combination of **white postocular spot** and **whitish patch on side of rump**. Uncommon from 2,300 to 5,900 ft (700 to 1,800 m). Often feeds on low-growing flowers at forest edge, but tends to perch on high, exposed twigs. Foraging flight is slow and insect-like, with body held horizontal and tail cocked up. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Scintillant Hummingbird *Selasphorus scintilla*

3 in (8 cm). Male's **brilliant orange gorget** distinguishes it from the male Volcano Hummingbird; female has **rufous tail feathers** with black subterminal band. Occurs at middle elevations of Central and Talamanca Cordilleras (from 3,000 to 7,200 ft [900 to 2,200 m]), where it is fairly common on Pacific slopes and uncommon on Caribbean slopes; rare at upper elevations of Tilarán Cordillera. Typically feeds low at forest edge, and in brushy pastures and gardens. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Volcano Hummingbird *Selasphorus flammula*

3 in (8 cm). The three CR races are told apart by color of male's gorget; females are identical (geographic distributions are indicated on illustrations). Compared to very similar Scintillant Hummingbird, male's gorget color is diagnostic; female has **bronzy-green central tail feathers**. Occurs in Central and Talamanca Cordilleras; common above 5,900 ft (1,800 m); uncommon from 3,900 to 5,900 ft (1,200 to 1,800 m), mostly from March to July. Forages in forest edge, gardens, and overgrown open areas; also in paramo. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Pigeons, Doves

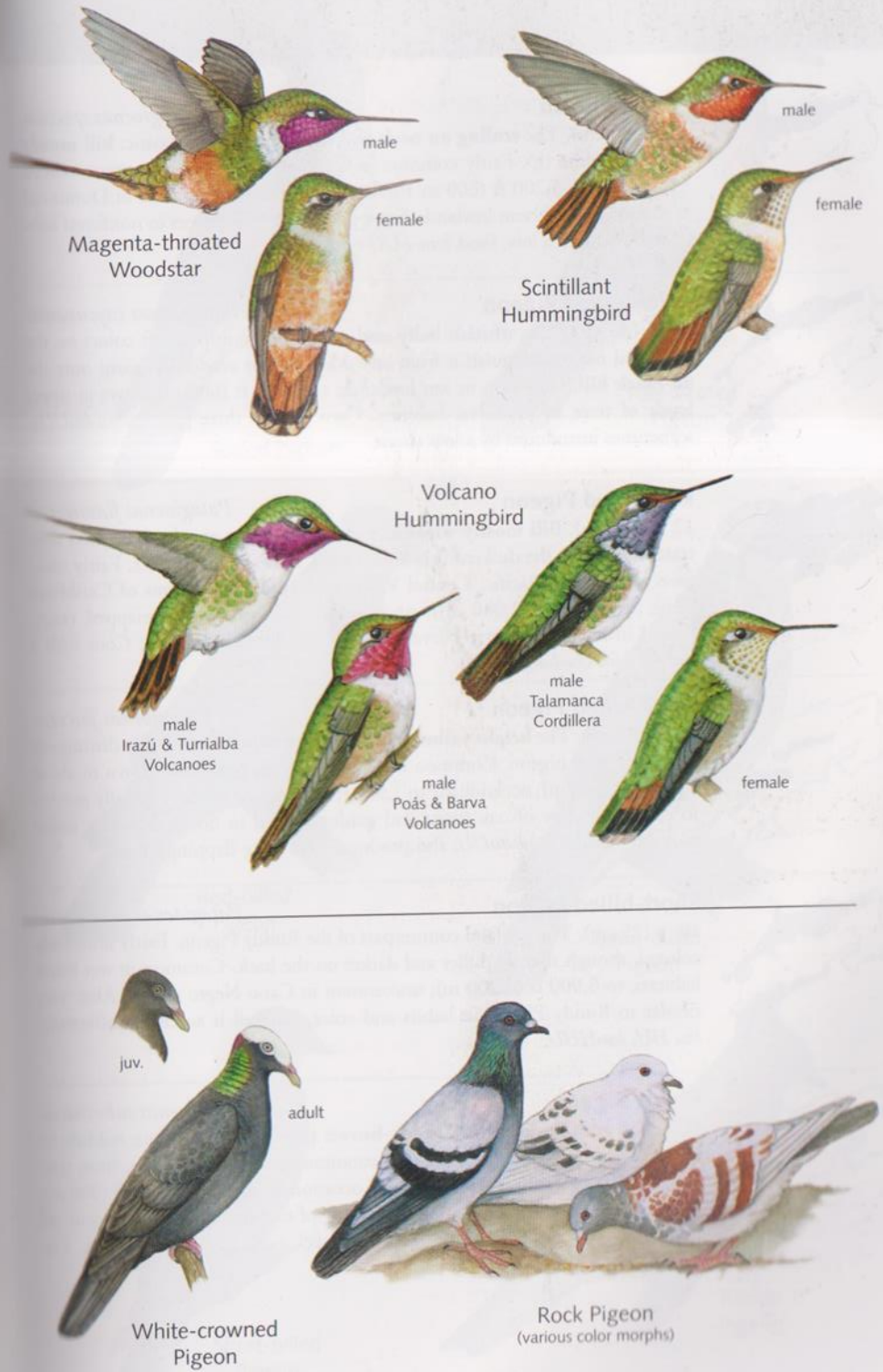
COLUMBIDAE. A cosmopolitan family of small-headed, full-breasted birds. Pigeons and doves predominantly feed on seeds and fruits, and members of this family inhabit all regions and ecological niches in CR, from deep rainforest to city streets. Seen perched atop a distant tree or passing by in swift, strong flight, they could be mistaken for a raptor.

White-crowned Pigeon *Patagioenas leucocephala*

13 in (33 cm). A dark-gray pigeon with a contrasting white crown. Female and juvenile have grayer crowns. Casual, with several reports along Caribbean coast. Feeds on fruit in coastal trees.

Rock Pigeon *Columba livia*

12 in (30 cm). The common "city pigeon" is one of the species most commensal with humans throughout the globe and should be recognizable, in all its numerous color patterns, even to nonbirders. In CR, it is often difficult to know if birds are truly wild or have a pigeon house nearby that they return to. However, if you really want to check off this species on your CR list, the birds around the National Theater in downtown San José are feral; they roost and nest on building ledges.



Scaled Pigeon — *Patagioenas speciosa*

13 in (33 cm). The **scaling on neck and underparts** is diagnostic; **bill mostly red** with white tip. Fairly common in southern Pacific intermontane valleys; from 2,000 to 5,200 ft (600 to 1,600 m), but down to sea level in Dominical area; rare in Caribbean lowlands. Stays in upper levels of trees in nonforest habitats. Coos with a low, loud *huu-hUU-huu.*

Pale-vented Pigeon — *Patagioenas cayennensis*

12 in (30 cm). Has **whitish belly and vent**. The multiple, soft colors on the head and neck distinguish it from any other similar arboreal pigeon; note the **all-black bill**. Common in wet lowlands; to 2,000 ft (600 m). Stays in upper levels of trees in nonforest habitats. Coos with a three-part *hu-hu-huUUu*, sometimes introduced by a low *wuuu.*

Red-billed Pigeon — *Patagioenas flavirostris*

12 in (30 cm). **Bill mostly whitish**, with red base; the gray back feathers contrast subtly with the dull reddish-brown head, neck, and shoulders. Fairly common in northern Pacific, Central Valley, and middle elevations of Caribbean slope (to 6,600 ft [2,000 m]); uncommon elsewhere within mapped range. Found in middle and upper levels of trees in nonforest habitats. Coos with a forlorn *huUUu-hu-hu-huuu.*

Band-tailed Pigeon — *Patagioenas fasciata*

14 in (36 cm). The **bright yellow bill** and **white nape band** readily distinguish this large, gray pigeon. Common in highlands from timberline down to about 4,600 ft (1,400 m); occasionally to 1,600 ft (500 m), or lower. Typically perches in canopy at edge of oak forest and gardens, often in flocks. Makes a rather guttural *huhuUU, hu-huUU*; also produces loud wing-flapping sound.

Short-billed Pigeon — *Patagioenas nigrirostris*

10 in (25 cm). The lowland counterpart of the Ruddy Pigeon. Fairly uniformly colored, though slightly duller and darker on the back. Common in wet forest habitats, to 3,900 ft (1,200 m); uncommon in Caño Negro region. Also very similar to Ruddy Pigeon in habits and voice, but call is accented differently: *hu, HU, hu-HUU.*

Ruddy Pigeon — *Patagioenas subvinacea*

11 in (28 cm). A **uniformly ruddy-brown** pigeon, slightly more reddish on back than Short-billed Pigeon. Fairly common at higher elevations, from timberline down to 4,600 ft (1,400 m), and occasionally as low as 3,000 ft (900 m). Hard to see since it perches in upper canopy of mature forest and adjacent tall second growth, though can be seen on gravel roads gathering pebbles. Frequently calls: *hu, hu-HU, hu.*

Scaled Pigeon

Pale-vented Pigeon

Red-billed Pigeon

Band-tailed Pigeon

Short-billed Pigeon

Ruddy Pigeon

White-winged Dove *Zenaida asiatica*

11 in (28 cm). Perched bird somewhat resembles Mourning Dove, but the **white wing stripe** is obvious even on the folded wing. Common resident in northern Pacific and across Central Valley (east to Paraíso); to 4,600 ft (1,400 m). Still rare on northern Caribbean slope, but established in La Fortuna. Resident population joined by migrants from Nov to May. Found in fairly open, nonforested areas; often perches on wires and feeds along roadsides. Quite commensal with humans. Varied calls include a throaty *who-cooks-for-you*.

Mourning Dove *Zenaida macroura*

12 in (30 cm). This slim bird is somewhat similar to the White-winged Dove, but has a **long, tapered tail** that is edged with white. Also note **black spotting on folded wing**. Fairly common resident around southern flank of Irazú Volcano, to 7,500 ft (2,300 m); uncommon in region between Zarcero and San Ramón and in foothills northeast of Liberia. Uncommon winter resident in northern Pacific lowlands, from Oct to March. Forages on ground in agricultural areas. Call is a deep, melancholy *hu-WUU, hu, hu, hu*.

Inca Dove *Columbina inca*

8 in (20 cm). **Scaled pattern above and below** is distinctive; has rufous primaries like smaller *Columbina* ground-doves, but long tail has white outer edges; also note **black bill**. Common in northern Pacific and western Central Valley; still extending its range south along Pacific coast and east of Cartago; to 4,600 ft (1,400 m). Forages on ground in fairly open areas. Gives an incessant *huuu-huup*.

Common Ground-Dove *Columbina passerina*

6 in (15 cm). Unlike other small doves, has **pinkish-red basal half of bill**. Further distinguished from similar Plain-breasted Ground-Dove by scaling on upper breast. Common in northern Pacific, fairly common in western Central Valley, rare in eastern Central Valley and Caño Negro region; to 4,600 ft (1,400 m). Forages on ground in open areas. Repeats an upwardly inflected *cuuup*.

Plain-breasted Ground-Dove *Columbina minuta*

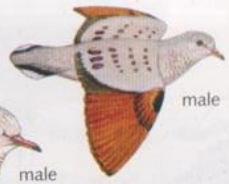
5 in (13 cm). Resembles Common Ground-Dove, but lacks scaling and spotting on breast; has **black bill**. Also similar to larger, browner female Ruddy Ground-Dove, but in flight shows rufous only in primaries and white on corners of tail (as does Common Ground-Dove). Uncommon throughout patchy range. Individuals or pairs forage on ground in open areas. Repeats a rather rapid *huup*.

Ruddy Ground-Dove *Columbina talpacoti*

7 in (18 cm). The male's bright reddish-brown body and contrasting light-gray head are diagnostic. Female resembles Plain-breasted Ground-Dove but is browner and has **no white in tail**; female also resembles female Blue Ground-Dove (p. 164), but has black markings on wing. Common in wet lowlands and in eastern Central Valley, uncommon to rare in northern Pacific; to 4,600 ft (1,400 m). Forages on ground in open areas. Repeats a low *hu-hUUp*.

White-winged Dove

Mourning Dove



male

male

female

Common Ground-Dove

Inca Dove

male

female

Plain-breasted Ground-Dove

male

female

Ruddy Ground-Dove

Blue Ground-Dove *Claravis pretiosa*

8 in (20 cm). The handsome male is not likely confused. Brown female has distinctive **chestnut wing markings** and a chestnut rump that contrasts with the dull-brown back; similar female Ruddy Ground-Dove (p. 162) has black wing markings. Uncommon in wet lowlands and foothills, rare in northern Pacific; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Prefers edges and openings in forested areas; also occurs in mangroves and visits harvested rice fields. Often in pairs; more likely seen flying swiftly past or perched in a tree than on the ground. Call is an even, far-carrying *BUUP!*, repeated about once per second.

Maroon-chested Ground-Dove *Claravis mondetoura*

9 in (23 cm). The only CR dove with **wing bars**; also has **white outer tail feathers**. Rare in highlands; from 3,000 to 9,800 ft (900 to 3,000 m). Forages on ground in dense undergrowth (especially seeding bamboo) at edge of highland forest. Gives a deep *wuup, wuup, wuup*.

Gray-headed Dove *Leptotila plumbeiceps*

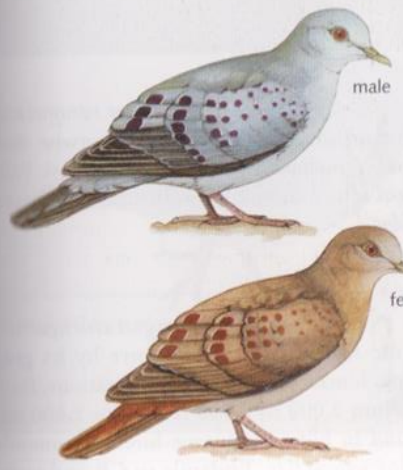
11 in (28 cm). Very much like White-tipped Dove, but with **red orbital skin**. Distinguished from Gray-chested Dove by **buffy cheeks** and **gray crown and nape**. Fairly common in Caño Negro region and on western side of Nicoya Peninsula, rare elsewhere in Pacific lowlands; to 3,300 ft (1,000 m). Pairs or individuals forage on ground in humid forest and second growth. Call is deeper and hoarser than call of White-tipped Dove and given at about three-second intervals.

White-tipped Dove *Leptotila verreauxi*

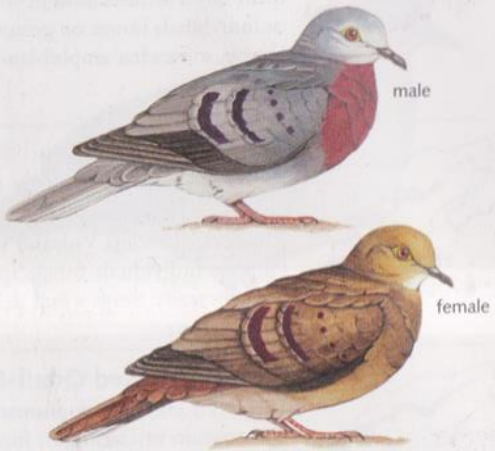
11 in (28 cm). Told apart from the other two *Leptotila* species by the **light-blue orbital skin**. Common on Pacific slope and in Central Valley, to 7,200 ft (2,200 m); uncommon (though increasing in number) in Caribbean lowlands. Pairs or individuals forage on ground in light woodlands, gardens, and roadsides. Utters a low, mournful *whuuu*, lasting about one second (at intervals of six to seven seconds).

Gray-chested Dove *Leptotila cassini*

11 in (28 cm). Differs from Gray-headed and White-tipped Doves in having **golden-brown nape** (much more apparent on Pacific race) and darker gray breast; note red orbital skin. Fairly common in wet lowlands and foothills; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Pairs or individuals forage on ground in wet forest, at forest edge, and in shaded gardens. Its forlorn call, similar in quality to that of the White-tipped Dove, rises then falls slightly, lasting about 1.5 seconds.



Blue Ground-Dove



Maroon-chested Ground-Dove

Gray-headed Dove

White-tipped Dove

Gray-chested Dove

Olive-backed Quail-Dove *Geotrygon veraguensis*

9 in (23 cm). The **white cheek stripe** readily identifies this otherwise dark quail-dove. Uncommon in wet Caribbean lowlands; to 1,600 ft (500 m). Pairs or individuals forage on ground in wet forest; commonly walk on trails. Gives a hoarse, somewhat amphibian-like *whu*.

Chiriqui Quail-Dove *Geotrygon chiriquensis*

12 in (30 cm). Told apart from the male Ruddy Quail-Dove by its **gray crown** and **black moustachial stripe**. Uncommon at middle elevations, from Rincón de la Vieja Volcano south; from 2,000 to 7,900 ft (600 to 2,400 m). Pairs or individuals forage on ground in humid montane forest; commonly walk on trails. Sings a sad, descending *whuuUUu*. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Purplish-backed Quail-Dove *Geotrygon lawrencii*

10 in (25 cm). **Black moustachial stripe** contrasts strongly with **pale face**. Uncommon in Caribbean foothills; from 1,300 to 3,300 ft (400 to 1,000 m). Pairs or individuals forage on ground in wet forest; commonly walk on trails. Repeats a rising *hu-hua-hoooo*.

Buff-fronted Quail-Dove *Geotrygon costaricensis*

11 in (28 cm). The **buff forehead** and **greenish nape** are diagnostic. Uncommon at middle elevations and in highlands; from 3,900 to 9,800 ft (1,200 to 3,000 m). Pairs or individuals forage on ground in wet montane forest; commonly walk on trails. Incessantly repeats a rising *wha, wha, wha, wha...* **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Violaceous Quail-Dove *Geotrygon violacea*

9 in (23 cm). A relatively plain quail-dove that might be confused with a *Leptotila* dove (p. 164), but has **chestnut-brown wings** and **violet back**. Uncommon on Pacific slope of Guanacaste Cordillera; from 1,600 to 3,900 ft (500 to 1,200 m). Rare and spottily distributed in Caribbean lowlands and foothills, to 2,000 ft (600 m); also very rare on Nicoya Peninsula. Two sight records from Carara NP. Forages on ground in mature forest, but somewhat arboreal. Repeats a doubled *hu-hu*, the second note slightly lower pitched.

Ruddy Quail-Dove *Geotrygon montana*

9 in (23 cm). The only CR quail-dove with a **brown moustachial stripe** (Chiriqui Quail-Dove has a black moustachial stripe). Male is distinctly ruddy, female much duller brown. Fairly common in southern Pacific lowlands and foothills; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). On Caribbean slope, rare in lowlands and uncommon in foothills; to 3,300 ft (1,000 m). Individuals forage on ground in wet forest; commonly walk on trails. Utters a deep, resonant *huuu*, similar to, but shorter than, call of Gray-chested Dove (p. 164).

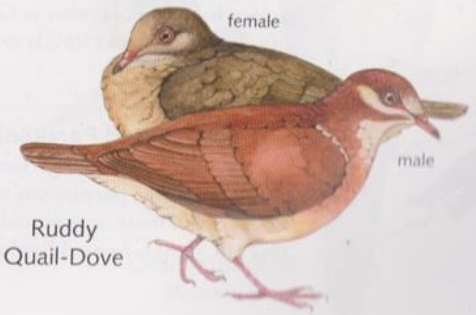
Olive-backed Quail-Dove

Chiriqui Quail-Dove

Purplish-backed Quail-Dove

Buff-fronted Quail-Dove

Violaceous Quail-Dove



Ruddy Quail-Dove

PSITTACIDAE. From the large and gaudy Scarlet Macaw to the tiny Red-fronted Parrotlet, the unique bill shape should easily classify any member of this family. These brightly colored birds, however, can be uncannily difficult to see well as they fly silhouetted against the sky or blend in amid vegetation. Listen for their vocalizations or the sound of falling pieces of fruit to help locate them. Plumage patterns on the head are important for distinguishing among congeners.

Sulphur-winged Parakeet *Pyrrhura hoffmanni*

9 in (23 cm). In flight, shows **bright yellow in wings**. On perched birds, note **red ear patch**. Uncommon in Dota region and Talamanca Cordillera, from 5,200 to 9,800 ft (1,600 to 3,000 m); in second half of year descends to as low as 2,300 ft (700 m) on both Caribbean and Pacific slopes. Small flocks forage in forest canopy, at forest edge, and in orchards. Flight call is quite high-pitched, with none of the screeching quality of other parakeets. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Crimson-fronted Parakeet *Aratinga finschi*

11 in (28 cm). In flight, note **red on leading portion of underwing** and long, pointed tail. Perched birds show **red forehead**. The most common parakeet in the Central Valley, it is also common on the Caribbean slope and in the southern Pacific; to 5,900 ft (1,800 m). Flocks frequent gardens and forest edge; often found in *Erythrina* and palm trees. Produces a boisterous chattering *klee-klee-chee-chee...*, somewhat similar to call of other *Aratinga* parakeets. **Endemic from southeastern Nicaragua to western Panama.**

[The following three species are mostly green and have blue flight feathers. They are distinguished by coloration on head and throat; also, no range overlap.]

Olive-throated Parakeet *Aratinga nana*

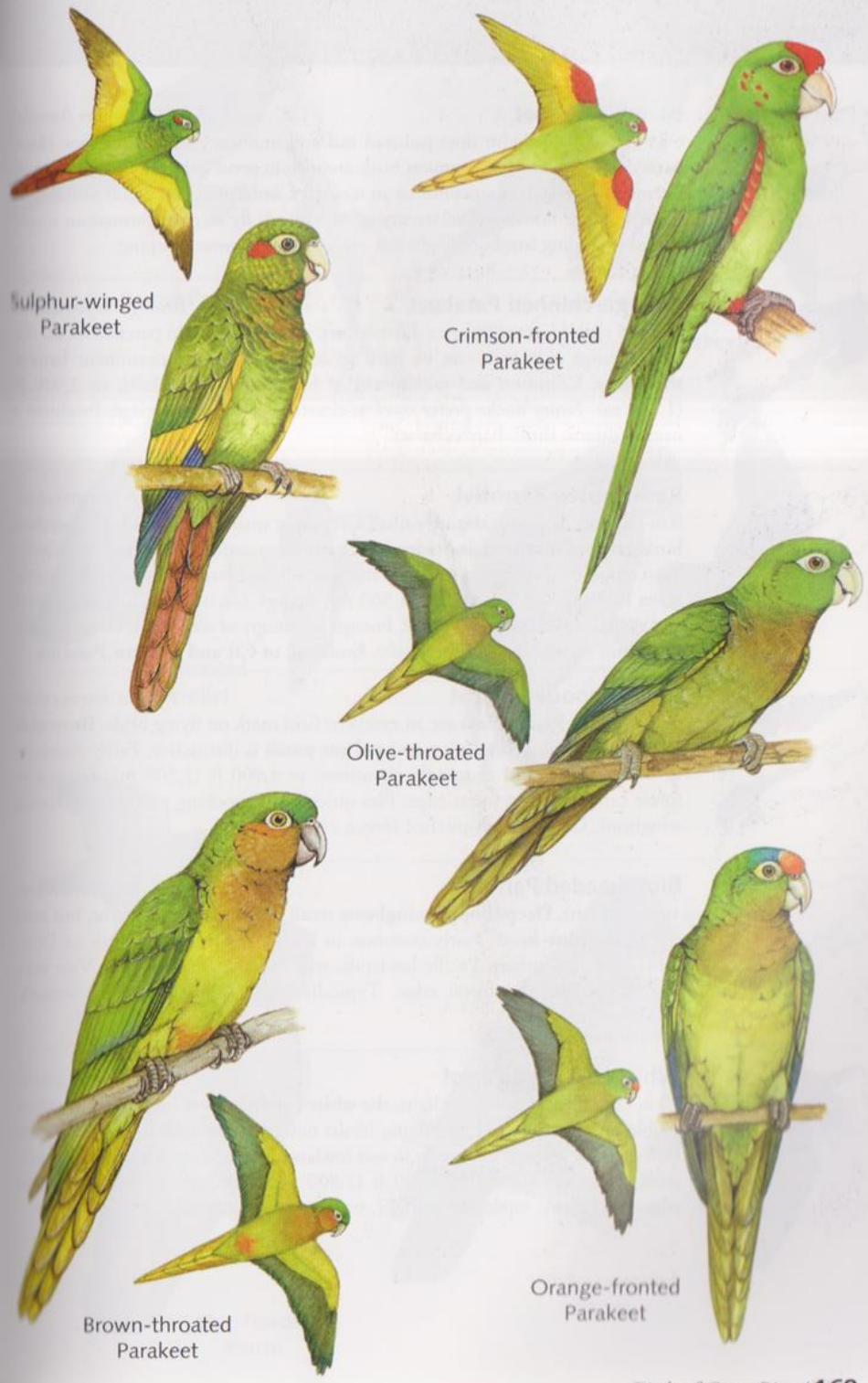
9 in (23 cm). Has **entirely green head** and dull **olive throat**. Fairly common throughout Caribbean lowlands; rarely up to 2,300 ft (700 m). Small flocks feed in fruiting trees in gardens and at forest edge. Calls are higher pitched and not as harsh as those of Crimson-fronted Parakeet.

Brown-throated Parakeet *Aratinga pertinax*

10 in (25 cm). Has **pale-orange patch below eye** and **brownish throat, breast, and sides of face**. A recent arrival from Panama, now fairly common in lowland garden habitats as far west as Gamba, and likely still spreading in southern Pacific. Makes a chatter similar to that of Crimson-fronted Parakeet.

Orange-fronted Parakeet *Aratinga canicularis*

9 in (23 cm). Has **orange forehead** and **blue midcrown**. Fairly common in northern Pacific, uncommon in western Central Valley; to 3,300 ft (1,000 m). Flocks visit forests, agricultural areas, and mangroves. Screeching call similar to that of Crimson-fronted Parakeet.



Barred Parakeet *Bolborhynchus lineola*

6 in (15 cm). In flight, note **pointed tail** and uniform green color. Fine black barring difficult to observe unless birds are seen in good light. Fairly common in Talamanca Cordillera, uncommon in Central Cordillera; from 2,600 to 9,800 ft (800 to 3,000 m). Flocks of twenty or more birds fly in close formation; seems partial to seeding bamboo. Flight call consists of soft, sweet chirping.

Orange-chinned Parakeet *Brotogeris jugularis*

7 in (18 cm). Flight silhouette shows **short, pointed tail**. On perched birds, the small orange chin spot can be hard to see, but note the prominent **brown shoulders**. Common and widespread in lowlands and foothills; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Noisy flocks prefer trees in clearings and at forest edge. Produces a near-constant, shrill, harsh chatter.

Red-fronted Parrotlet *Touit costaricensis*

6 in (15 cm). In flight, the only small CR parrot with a **square tail**. On perched birds, the **red forehead and wing patch** are diagnostic. Uncommon on Caribbean slope of Talamanca and Central Cordilleras, rare farther north; mostly from 1,600 to 4,900 ft (500 to 1,500 m), though can occur as low as sea level and as high as 9,800 ft (3,000 m). Forages in canopy of wet forest. Gives a shrill, querulous *chheee? chee, che-de-de-dee*. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Brown-hooded Parrot *Pyrilia haematotis*

9 in (23 cm). **Red axillars** are an excellent field mark on flying birds. **Brownish head** with **white orbital ring** and **red ear patch** is distinctive. Fairly common in wet lowlands and at middle elevations; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Forages in forest canopy and at forest edge; flies quickly with rocking motion and strong wingbeats. Call is a high-pitched *chreea, cheea*.

Blue-headed Parrot *Pionus menstruus*

10 in (25 cm). **Deep, floppy wingbeats** recall White-crowned Parrot, but note distinctive **blue head**. Fairly common in Caribbean lowlands north to Parismina; also in southern Pacific lowlands, west to Sierpe, and in San Vito area. Prefers gardens and forest edge. Typically gives doubled, metallic screech: *shreenk, shreenk*.

White-crowned Parrot *Pionus senilis*

10 in (25 cm). Even in poor light, the **white forehead and midcrown** are often visible on both perched and flying birds; note **deep wingbeat** (compare with Blue-headed Parrot). Common in wet lowlands and middle elevations, uncommon in Central Valley; to 5,900 ft (1,800 m). Frequents gardens and forest edge. Very noisy, especially in flight, making a shrill chatter.

Barred Parakeet

Orange-chinned Parakeet

Red-fronted Parrotlet

Brown-hooded Parrot

Blue-headed Parrot

White-crowned Parrot

Great Green Macaw — *Ara ambiguus*

33 in (84 cm). Its large size and lovely blend of colors should render it unmistakable. Uncommon in northeastern Caribbean lowlands, rare south of Limón; occasionally to 2,600 ft (800 m). Seasonal movements related to ripening of *Dipteryx* fruits. Loud *AAK, RAAK* can be heard at a great distance.

Scarlet Macaw — *Ara macao*

35 in (89 cm). Unmistakable. This species is now readily found only in the Carara NP/Tárcoles area and on the Osa Peninsula. A few birds still remain in the Palo Verde NP area, and recent sightings in the northeastern Caribbean lowlands suggest it may be recolonizing areas where it had not been seen for at least fifty years. Flying birds announce themselves with a raucous, harsh *RAAAK, RAAAK*. The national bird of Honduras.

[Species in the genus *Amazona*, which includes the following four species, fly with stiff, shallow wingbeats. Try to note color on head.]

White-fronted Parrot — *Amazona albifrons*

10 in (25 cm). In flight, the only CR *Amazona* with **entirely blue secondaries**; male has red patch on leading edge of upperwing (absent in female). The **white forehead** and **red orbital skin** are distinctive. Common in northern Pacific, rare in western Central Valley; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Found in both wooded and open areas. Utters a raucous *ak-ak-ak-ak-ak*.

Red-lored Parrot — *Amazona autumnalis*

13 in (33 cm). Very similar to Mealy Parrot, but note **red forehead** on both perched and flying birds. Common in wet lowlands and foothills; to 3,300 ft (1,000 m). Prefers forest edge and gardens; more tolerant of deforestation than Mealy Parrot. On average, its varied calls are higher-pitched than those of Mealy Parrot; listen for its metallic *klink, klink, klink*.

Mealy Parrot — *Amazona farinosa*

15 in (38 cm). Best told apart from Red-lored Parrot by **dark cere**, wide white orbital ring, and absence of red on forehead. Common in wet lowlands; to 2,000 ft (600 m). More dependent on forested tracts than Red-lored Parrot, although it also frequents forest edge and gardens. Among its many vocalizations, note deep *cheyup, cheyup*.

Yellow-naped Parrot — *Amazona auropalliata*

14 in (36 cm). A large, slow-flying parrot with distinctive **yellow nape**. Uncommon in northern Pacific; to 2,000 ft (600 m); birds seen in Central Valley may be escaped cage birds. Forages high in trees. Makes a wide variety of deep utterances, without all the squawking of other *Amazona* species. Unfortunately, its value as a pet bird has led to population decline.

CUCULIDAE. Most cuckoos are slender birds with long tails; their narrow bills usually have an arched culmen. Except for the three species of ani, which are black, CR cuckoos are attired in brown tones. Cuckoos tend to be furtive in their habits, so vocalizations are often the best clue to their presence—though migrants are usually silent.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus americanus*

12 in (30 cm). **Rufous primaries** distinguish this species from both Black-billed and Mangrove Cuckoos. Also note **yellow bill** with dark culmen and tip, and **large white tips on tail feathers**. Uncommon passage migrant, mostly on Caribbean slope, from Sept to mid-Nov and from mid-April to late May; rare winter resident, mostly in northern Pacific. Forages concealed in shrubbery at forest edge, in second growth, and in gardens.

Black-billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus erythropthalmus*

12 in (30 cm). **Narrow red orbital ring** (yellowish-green on juvenile) distinguishes this species from the Yellow-billed and Mangrove Cuckoos. Also note **dark bill** and **small white tips on tail feathers**. Passage migrants are rare on both Caribbean and Pacific slopes and in the Central Valley; to 3,300 ft (1,000 m); from late Sept to mid-Nov and from April to mid-May. Forages concealed in shrubbery at forest edge, in second growth, and in gardens.

Mangrove Cuckoo *Coccyzus minor*

12 in (30 cm). **Black mask** and **buffy underparts** (color varies in intensity between individuals) distinguish this from the Yellow-billed and Black-billed Cuckoos. Upper mandible is black, lower mandible is yellow with black tip; also note large white tips on tail feathers. Uncommon Central American migrant in northern Pacific lowlands, uncommon to rare in southern Pacific lowlands and in western Central Valley (to 3,600 ft [1,100 m]); from Dec to June. Often sluggish in CR, favors second growth and gardens over mangroves. Utters a rapid series of raspy, throaty notes with the last note or two slightly lower pitched.

Striped Cuckoo *Tapera naevia*

12 in (30 cm). Overall color and pattern, plus habitat, could suggest a large sparrow, but note curved upper mandible. Distinguished from larger Pheasant Cuckoo by **plain breast** and unextravagant tail feathers. Fairly common in Caribbean lowlands, southern Pacific, and western Central Valley; to 3,600 ft (1,100 m). Uncommon around Gulf of Nicoya and on Nicoya Peninsula. Inhabits brushy fields and second growth; forages in undergrowth. Sings from an exposed perch; frequently whistles two clear notes, the second slightly higher, while raising and lowering crest feathers. Also sings a crescendoing five-note version: *tsee-tsee-tsee-TSEE-deep*.

Pheasant Cuckoo *Dromococcyx phasianellus*

15 in (38 cm). **Buffy breast with brown streaks** and long, broad tail feathers distinguish this species from Striped Cuckoo. Rare throughout Pacific lowlands and foothills; occurs as high as 3,900 ft (1,200 m) in the south. Skulks in undergrowth scrub at forest edge and in second growth. Whistles three- and four-note calls reminiscent of a Striped Cuckoo, but third note quavering.

Greater Ani — *Crotophaga major*

18 in (46 cm). Known from a handful of sightings of single birds at Tortuguero (early 2003, Dec 2004, and Jan 2010). Larger than the other two anis and further distinguished by pale iris and arched basal half of upper mandible. Perhaps more likely mistaken for a male Great-tailed Grackle (p. 358), but the bill is diagnostic. Forages low in vegetation near water.

Smooth-billed Ani — *Crotophaga ani*

14 in (36 cm). This and the Groove-billed Ani can be told apart from other essentially all-black birds of open country (cowbirds, grackles, and blackbirds) by their arched, laterally compressed bills. Smooth-billed Ani is very similar to adult Groove-billed Ani, but has **smooth, more highly arched bill**; virtually identical to juvenile Groove-billed Ani (fortunately, little range overlap). Fairly common in southern Pacific, north to around Quepos; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Groups of four to twelve forage on ground and perch low in fields and gardens. Typical call is a rising *weeeik*.

Groove-billed Ani — *Crotophaga sulcirostris*

12 in (30 cm). This and the Smooth-billed Ani can be told apart from other essentially all-black birds of open country (cowbirds, grackles, and blackbirds) by their arched, laterally compressed bills. Adult Groove-billed Ani is very similar to Smooth-billed Ani, but has **striations on the upper mandible**; juvenile virtually identical to Smooth-billed Ani (little range overlap). Common and widespread; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m); rare in southern Pacific. Small groups forage on ground and perch low in fields and gardens; often follow cattle to eat the insects they stir up. Common call is a tinkling *TEE-ho, TEE-ho*.

Squirrel Cuckoo — *Piaya cayana*

18 in (46 cm). With **bright rufous upperparts** and **long tail**, not likely confused. Common and widespread; to 7,500 ft (2,300 m). Found in gardens, second growth, and at forest edge; hops among branches in a squirrel-like manner in search of caterpillars. Among its various calls is an arresting *IK-weyeew*. In breeding season (Jan to Aug), gives a long series of dry *whip* notes.

Lesser Ground-Cuckoo — *Morococcyx erythropygus*

10 in (25 cm). The singular facial markings readily distinguish it; no other CR species has **bare yellow skin in front of the eye** and **blue skin behind the eye**. Fairly common in northern Pacific and in western Central Valley; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Stealthily keeps to thickets and brushy fields, occasionally perches openly. At intervals, delivers a loud, long series of trilled whistles that accelerate then gradually slow.

Rufous-vented Ground-Cuckoo — *Neomorphus geoffroyi*

19 in (48 cm). Not likely mistaken. Rare in Caribbean lowlands and foothills, also on Pacific slope of Guanacaste Cordillera; to 3,000 ft (900 m). Dwells in understory of wet forest. Follows army-ant raids and, reportedly, peccaries to feed on the insects that they flush out. Produces a sharp cracking sound by snapping its bill shut; also utters a drawn out, dove-like *huuuuUUu*.

TROGONIDAE. Trogons are colorful and fairly sedentary birds of forests and forest edges. Females have somewhat duller plumage than males. To distinguish between similarly plumaged species, note bill, eye, and eye-ring color, as well as undertail pattern.

Black-headed Trogon *Trogon melanocephalus*

11 in (28 cm). The only yellow-bellied trogon in CR with a **pale-blue orbital ring** and **blue-gray bill**; female distinguished from female Gartered Trogon by **unbarred wing coverts** and **extensive white tips** on underside of tail feathers. Common in northern Pacific lowlands and foothills and in Caño Negro region, rare in western Central Valley; to 2,600 ft (800 m). Frequents lower and middle levels of dry and gallery forest, forest edge, and gardens. The call is an accelerating series of chucks, rising in pitch and then terminating with several quickly descending notes.

Gartered Trogon *Trogon caligatus*

9 in (23 cm). Male is only CR trogon with a **yellow orbital ring**. Female's orbital ring is whitish and elliptical; distinguished from female Black-headed Trogon by **fine barring on wing coverts** and **narrow barring on undertail**. Widespread and common in wet lowlands and foothills, uncommon in drier areas; to 4,600 ft (1,400 m). Occurs in gallery forest, at forest edge, and in gardens, usually at middle or upper levels. The call—often given from a high perch—is a series of even-pitched notes (*kyew, kyew, kyew...*) that are higher pitched than those of the Slaty-tailed Trogon (p. 182).

Black-throated Trogon *Trogon rufus*

9 in (23 cm). On male, combination of **green head, blue orbital ring**, and **yellow bill** is diagnostic; female is only CR trogon with **yellow belly** and **brown upperparts**. Common in wet lowlands and foothills; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Favors lower and middle levels of mature wet forest and adjacent advanced second growth. The call—more whistled than that of other trogons—is a slow, deliberate series of two to five notes, reminiscent of a Chestnut-backed Antbird (p. 216), but all notes even-pitched.

Baird's Trogon

Trogon bairdii

11 in (28 cm). The only orangish-red bellied trogon in CR with a **pale-blue orbital ring** and **blue-gray bill** (female's bill is dark gray above and light gray below). Female distinguished from female Slaty-tailed Trogon (p. 182) by **fine barring on wing coverts**. Fairly common in lowlands and foothills of southern Pacific; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Favors lower and middle levels of mature wet forest. The chuckling call begins at a moderate pace, then rises in both pitch and tempo before slowing and dropping. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Elegant Trogon

Trogon elegans

11 in (28 cm). Some range overlap with Orange-bellied Trogon, but male Elegant Trogon is the only red-bellied trogon in CR with both **orange orbital ring** and **yellow bill**; and female is the only CR trogon with a **white ear patch**. Uncommon in northern Pacific lowlands and foothills; to 2,600 ft (800 m). Stays in middle and upper levels of mature dry and humid forests. The call consists of several harsh, guttural, almost frog-like croaks.

Collared Trogon

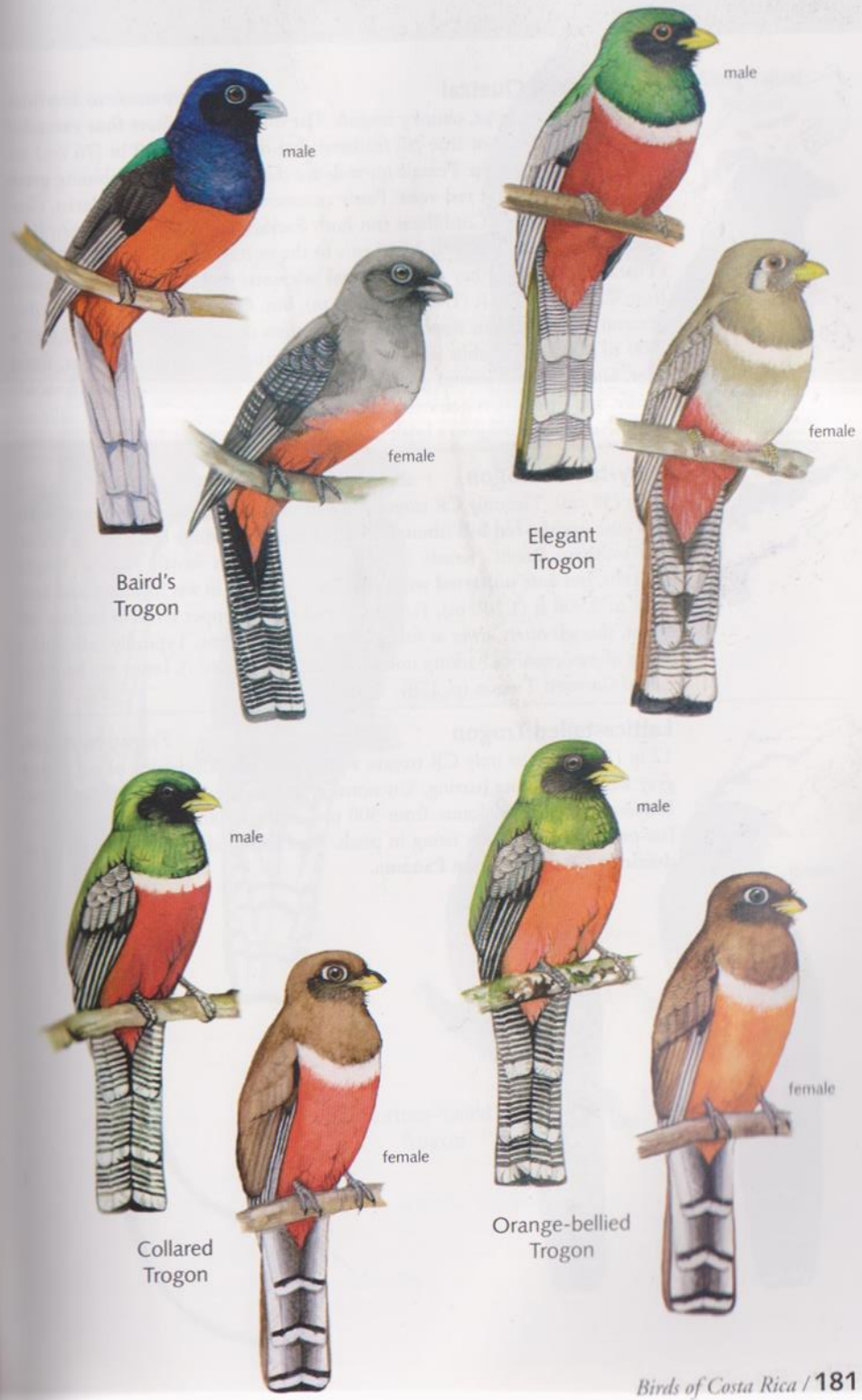
Trogon collaris

10 in (25 cm). Respective sexes virtually identical to Orange-bellied Trogon in every aspect, including voice, habitat, and habits. **The only difference is the color of the belly, which is red.** No range overlap with similar Elegant Trogon. Fairly common in central and southern highlands, from 2,600 to 9,200 ft (800 to 2,800 m); descends to foothills on both slopes, from June to Dec. Found in middle levels of mature wet montane forest, forest edge, and gardens. The call is a series of sweet, down-slurred *caow, caow* notes, with several seconds of silence between each couplet.

Orange-bellied Trogon

Trogon aurantiiventris

10 in (25 cm). Respective sexes virtually identical to the Collared Trogon in every aspect, including voice, habitat, and habits. **The only difference is the color of the belly, which is orange.** Common in wet northwestern highlands (where Collared Trogon is absent), uncommon farther south, where the two species' ranges overlap; from 2,300 to 7,500 ft (700 to 2,300 m). **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**



Resplendent Quetzal *Pharomachrus mocinno*

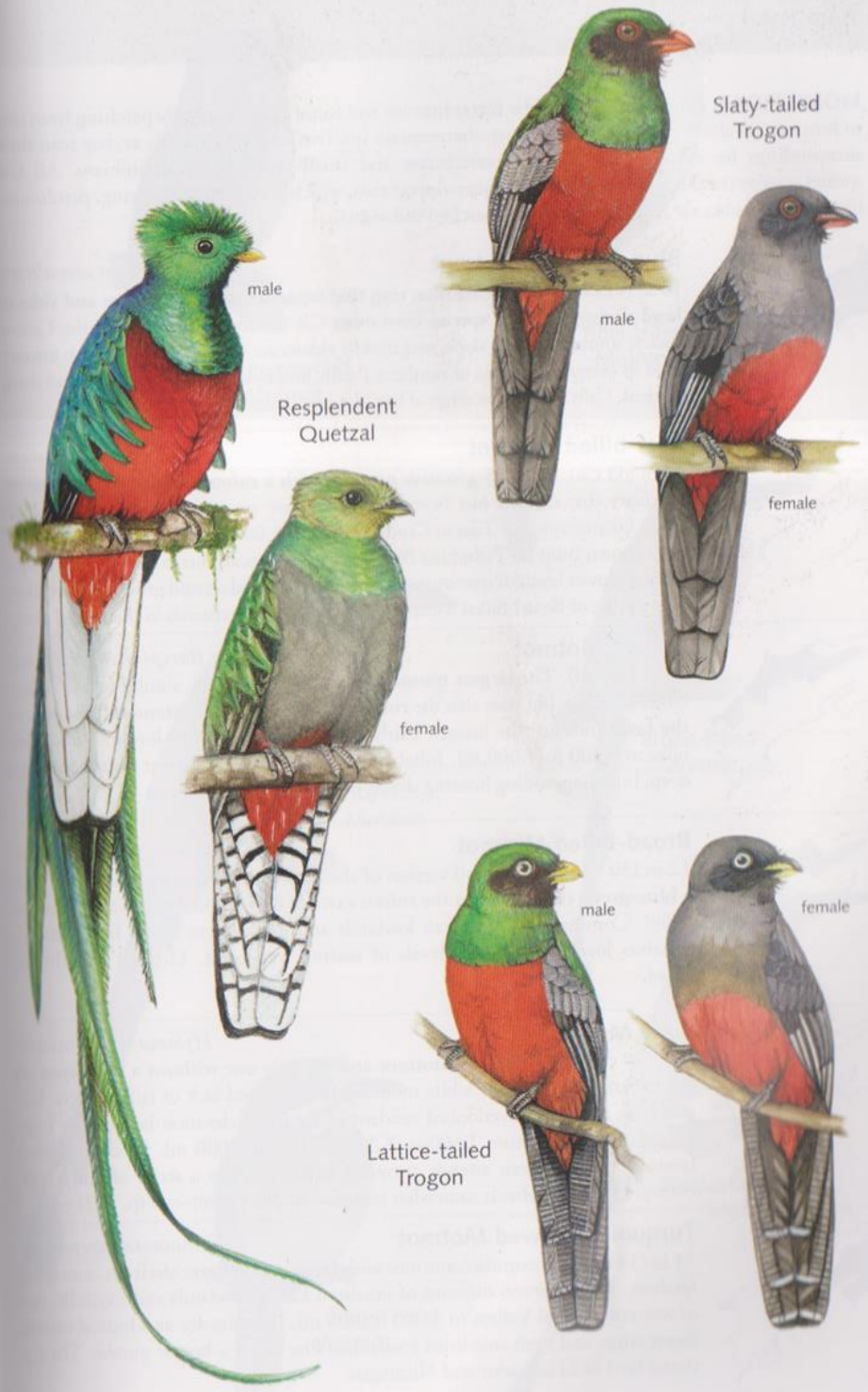
14 in (36 cm). A large, chunky trogon. The unique males have **four extended uppertail coverts** (not true tail feathers) that dangle up to 30 in (76 cm) beyond the square tail tip. Female quetzals are the only trogons combining **green head, gray belly**, and **red vent**. Fairly common in highlands of Tilarán, Central, and Talamanca Cordilleras (on both Pacific and Caribbean slopes); from 4,600 to 9,800 ft (1,400 to 3,000 m). In the northern part of their CR range (Tilarán Cordillera), they are altitudinal migrants; most of the year they occur from 4,600 to 5,200 ft (1,400 to 1,600 m), but, from about Sept to Nov, they descend the Caribbean slope, where most then occur from 1,600 to 2,600 ft (500 to 800 m). Inhabits middle levels of mature wet montane forest, forest edge, and advanced second growth. Feeds mostly on members of the avocado family, and even enters gardens when ripe fruit is available. The call is a throaty *kyow, kyow*; in flight, gives a brisk *wicka-wicka*. The national bird of Guatemala.

Slaty-tailed Trogon *Trogon massena*

12 in (30 cm). The only CR trogon with an **unpatterned dark-gray undertail**; also note **orange-red bill** (though female's upper mandible is black). In central and southern Pacific, female is easily confused with female Baird's Trogon (p. 180), but note **unbarred wing coverts**. Common in wet lowlands and foothills; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Forages in middle and upper levels of mature wet forest, though often lower at forest edge and in gardens. Typically calls with a series of monotonous barking notes (*aah, aah, aah, aah...*), lower pitched than call of Gartered Trogon (p. 178).

Lattice-tailed Trogon *Trogon clathratus*

12 in (30 cm). The only CR trogon with a **pale iris**. Underside of tail is dark gray with faint white barring. Uncommon in Caribbean foothills, south from Rincón de la Vieja Volcano; from 300 to 3,300 ft (100 to 1,000 m). Call is a fast-paced series of notes rising in pitch, then falling abruptly at the end. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**



Motmots

MOMOTIDAE. Handsome birds of the forest interior and forest edge. Typically perching from one to four meters above the ground, motmots often remain inactive for long intervals as they scan their surroundings for suitable prey—large invertebrates and small reptiles and amphibians. All CR species, except the Tody Motmot, have racquet-tipped tails, which they habitually swing, pendulum-like. Vocalizations are helpful for locating perched individuals.

Blue-crowned Motmot *Momotus coeruliceps*

16 in (41 cm). The **intense blue ring that separates the black crown and sides of head** distinguishes this species from other CR motmots. Common in the Central Valley, southern Pacific slope, and middle elevations; to 6,600 ft (2,000 m); uncommon in evergreen patches of northern Pacific lowlands. Prefers forest edge and shady gardens. Calls with a slow series of low, doubled notes: *hoop-hoop, hoop-hoop…*

Keel-billed Motmot *Electron carinatum*

13 in (33 cm). A mostly **greenish motmot with a rufous forehead** and a blue superciliary that extends just beyond the eye. Rare resident of Caribbean foothills along Guanacaste and Tilarán Cordilleras; from 1,000 to 3,000 ft (300 to 900 m). Also known from La Tirimbina Biological Reserve near Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí. Inhabits lower levels of mature wet forest and advanced second growth. Voice identical to that of Broad-billed Motmot, with which it interbreeds in the Arenal area.

Rufous Motmot *Baryphthengus martii*

18 in (46 cm). The **largest motmot**, with a very long tail; similar to the Broad-billed Motmot, but note that the **rufous on the underside extends all the way to the belly** (not just the breast). Fairly common in Caribbean lowlands and foothills; to 3,300 ft (1,000 m). Inhabits lower levels of mature wet forest. Song is a deep, bubbling, rolling hooting that is most often heard at dawn.

Broad-billed Motmot *Electron platyrhynchum*

12 in (30 cm). Like a small version of the Rufous Motmot, but note that it has a **blue-green chin** and that the rufous extends only to the lower breast (not the belly). Common in Caribbean lowlands and foothills; to 3,300 ft (1,000 m). Inhabits lower and middle levels of mature wet forest. The call is a throaty *awnk*.

Tody Motmot *Hylomanes momotula*

7 in (18 cm). The **smallest motmot** and the only one **without a dark spot on the breast**. Note also the white moustachial stripe and lack of tail racquets. Uncommon and easily overlooked resident of a narrow elevation belt on the Guanacaste Cordillera; from 1,600 to 3,300 ft (500 to 1,000 m). Perches at lower levels of humid forest; attends army-ant swarms. Emits a series of fairly high, even-pitched toots that is somewhat reminiscent of a pygmy-owl (p. 122) call.

Turquoise-browed Motmot *Eumomota superciliosa*

13 in (33 cm). An exquisite motmot with **large area of bare shaft** on central tail feathers. The common motmot of northern Pacific lowlands and foothills, rare in western Central Valley; to 3,000 ft (900 m). Inhabits dry and humid forests, forest edge, and even tree-lined roadsides. The call is a hoarse *qwahk*. The national bird of El Salvador and Nicaragua.

Kingfishers

ALCEDINIDAE. The six New World members of this cosmopolitan family all dive for fish and have large, stout, pointed bills—a kingfisher trademark. Similar-looking species can be told apart by observing details of plumage, as well as by size differences, though this can be deceptive.

Ringed Kingfisher — *Megaceryle torquata*

16 in (41 cm). The largest kingfisher in the Americas and, of the two with **blue-gray upperparts**, the only one with **mostly rufous underparts** (see Belted Kingfisher). Widespread and fairly common in lowlands and Central Valley; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Found along rivers and streams, as well as lakes, lagoons, and large ponds. The flight call is a loud, rasping *krek*. Also makes a loud, even rattle.

Belted Kingfisher — *Megaceryle alcyon*

13 in (33 cm). Similar to the Ringed Kingfisher, but note the **extensively white underparts**. Male has no rufous on underparts. Fairly common migrant from mid-Sept to early May. Found along rivers and streams, as well as lakes, lagoons, and large ponds; also occurs along seashores of both coasts. Makes an uneven rattle, not as loud as that of Ringed Kingfisher.

Green Kingfisher — *Chloroceryle americana*

7 in (18 cm). Distinguished from Amazon Kingfisher by **white spotting on the wings** and **white on outer tail feathers** (especially obvious in flight); female further told apart from female Amazon Kingfisher by **two green breast bands**. Common and potentially encountered at any wetland site, from rainwater pools to wide rivers; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Typically uses low perches, even rocks within waterways. The ticking call resembles the sound made by striking two pebbles against each other.

American Pygmy Kingfisher — *Chloroceryle aenea*

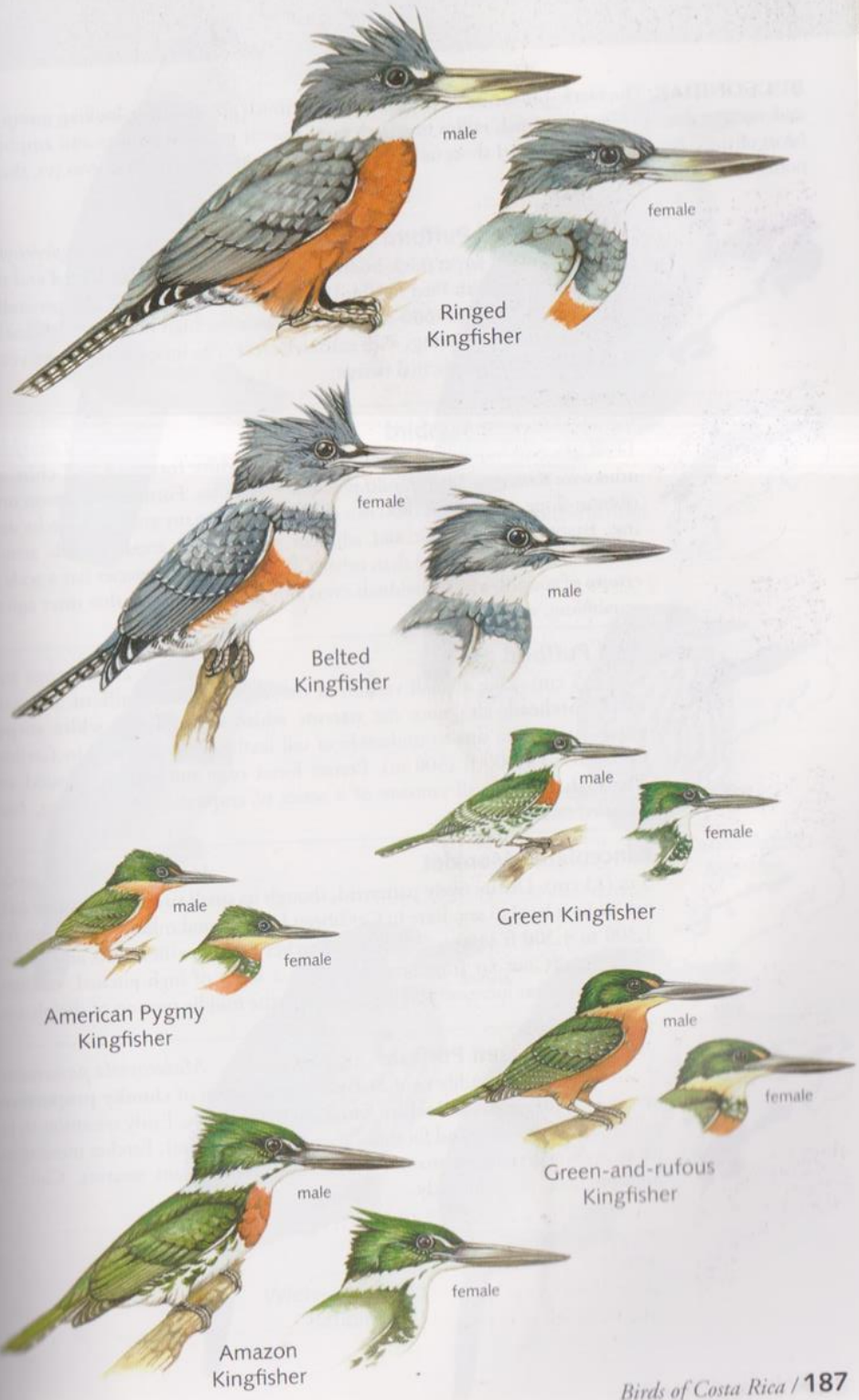
5 in (13 cm). This miniscule kingfisher is distinguished from the larger Green-and-rufous Kingfisher by **white belly and vent**. Uncommon in lowlands; to 2,000 ft (600 m). Favors swamp forest, mangroves, and shaded streams; occasionally found in more exposed situations. The call is like a soft rendition of the Green Kingfisher's.

Green-and-rufous Kingfisher — *Chloroceryle inda*

9 in (23 cm). The only **green-backed kingfisher with entirely rufous underparts** (female has dark-green breast band); the smaller American Pygmy Kingfisher has white belly and vent. An uncommon to rare inhabitant of lowland Caribbean swamp forests and shaded streams. Rarely perches or flies above eye level. The call is a harsh *drit-drit-drit*.

Amazon Kingfisher — *Chloroceryle amazona*

11 in (28 cm). Like a large version of the much more common Green Kingfisher, but the **wings and tail lack white**; female further told apart from female Green Kingfisher by **white on center of breast**. Fairly common in lowlands, and up to 3,900 ft (1,200 m) in Reventazón River watershed and in southern Pacific. Found along rivers, streams, ponds, lakes, and lagoons. Calls with a single harsh *chirt*, which is sometimes repeated in rapid succession to make a rattle.



BUCCONIDAE. The black-and-white or brown-toned puffbirds are a somber-looking group of sit-and-wait predators that make quick sallies to snatch large insects or small reptiles and amphibians. Most of these stout birds have rather short tails; their bills end in hooks or slight curves (vs. the sharp point of kingfishers [p. 186]).

White-necked Puffbird *Notharchus hyperrhynchus*

10 in (25 cm). A large, thick-bodied puffbird with a **white forehead** and nuchal collar (compare with Pied Puffbird). Widespread in lowlands, but generally uncommon; to 2,000 ft (600 m). Typically perches high on exposed branches at forest edge and in clearings with scattered trees. The infrequently given vocalization is a weak, high-pitched twitter.

White-fronted Nunbird *Monasa morphoeus*

11 in (28 cm). The **long coral-red bill** and **white forehead and chin** on an otherwise dark-gray bird should preclude confusion. Formerly common on Caribbean slope, to 2,600 ft (800 m); populations in many areas seem to be declining. Favors mature forest and adjacent semi-cleared areas; attends army-ant swarms. Much more vocal than other CR puffbirds, this species has a wide repertoire of sounds, and individuals even join in choral groups that utter agitated, squabbling, whistled notes.

Pied Puffbird *Notharchus tectus*

6 in (15 cm). Like a small version of the White-necked Puffbird, but with a **black forehead**; also note the **narrow white superciliary, white scapular patch**, and white tips to underside of tail feathers. Uncommon in Caribbean lowlands; to 1,000 ft (300 m). Prefers forest edge and partially cleared areas. The high-pitched call consists of a series of emphatic, crescendoing, buzzy, whistled notes.

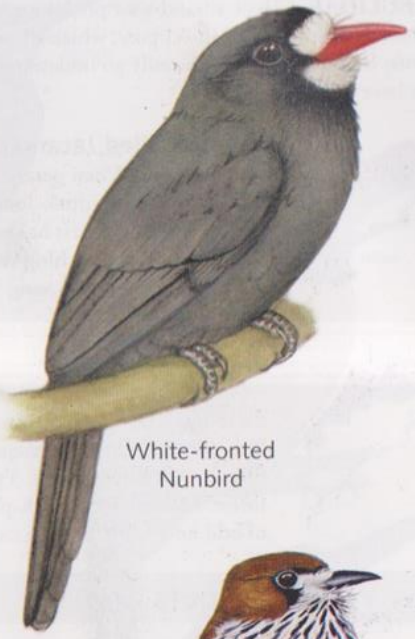
Lanceolated Monklet *Micromonacha lanceolata*

5 in (13 cm). Distinctively patterned, though its small size and sedentary habits can make it hard to see. Rare in Caribbean foothills and middle elevations; from 1,300 to 4,300 ft (400 to 1,300 m). Perches fairly low in forests and at forest edge, usually not far from streams. Gives a series of high-pitched, emphatic, rising notes that increases slightly in pace in the middle portion of the phrase.

White-whiskered Puffbird *Malacoptila panamensis*

8 in (20 cm). Not readily confused; the combination of **chunky proportions**, **streaked underparts**, and **white whiskers** is diagnostic. Fairly common in humid and wet lowlands and foothills; to 3,300 ft (1,000 m). Perches inconspicuously in understory of mature forest; attends army-ant swarms. Calls are high-pitched, soft, and reedy.

White-necked Puffbird



White-fronted Nunbird

Pied Puffbird

Lanceolated Monklet

female

male

White-whiskered Puffbird

Jacamars

GALBULIDAE. Classic sit-and-wait predators; with their bills held upwards, jacamars actively survey their environment for insect prey, which they catch in swift flight. Their stoic manner and green-and-rust colors allow them to easily go undetected. In CR species, the sexes are identical, except that males have white throats.

Rufous-tailed Jacamar *Galbula ruficauda*

9 in (23 cm). When perched, gives the impression of an oversized hummingbird. The bill is much longer and thinner than the Great Jacamar's. Fairly common in wet forest habitats; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Prefers forest edges and openings, often perching near eye level. The call note is a sharp *peep!* with a squeaky quality. The song is a long series of squeaks that increases in pitch and pace.

Great Jacamar *Jacamerops aureus*

12 in (30 cm). **Larger** and **chunkier** than the Rufous-tailed Jacamar, with a bill more the size and shape of a motmot's (unlike a motmot [p. 184], the Great Jacamar does not have racquet tail-tips). Rare in Caribbean lowlands and foothills; to 2,000 ft (600 m). Typically perches fairly high in canopy of mature wet forest. Makes a long, high-pitched, three-note whistle, as well as an assortment of odd noises, including a catlike meowing.

New World Barbets

CAPITONIDAE. The New World Barbets are fruit eaters that typically are found with mixed flocks. All species show some amount of sexual dimorphism. Costa Rica is the northern limit of the family's range.

Red-headed Barbet *Eubucco bourcierii*

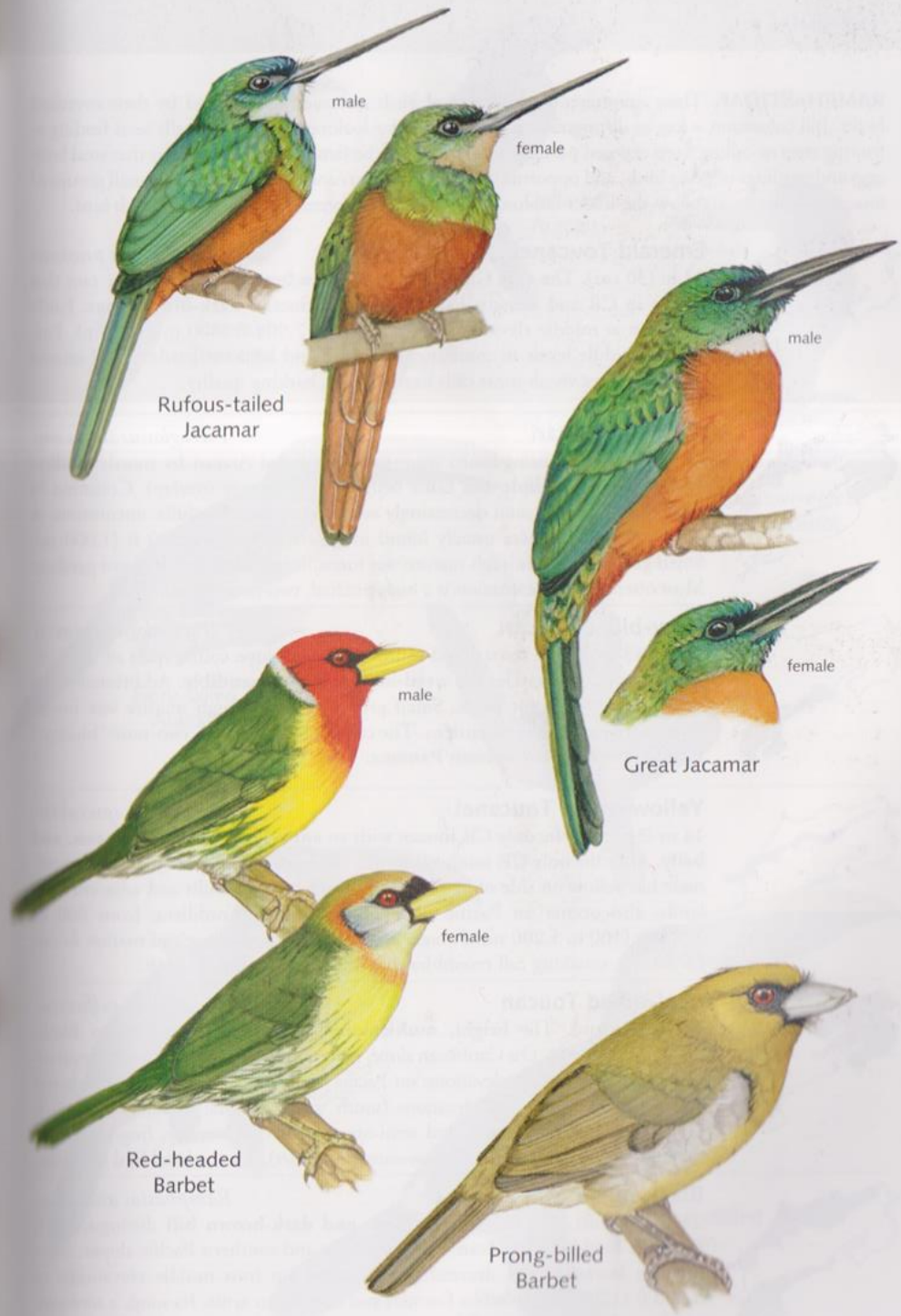
6 in (15 cm). **Red head** and **yellow bill** of male are distinctive. Likewise, the female's facial pattern is unique among CR species. Uncommon at middle elevations from Tilarán Cordillera south; from 1,300 to 5,900 ft (400 to 1,800 m). Forages at middle and upper levels of wet forest, often accompanying mixed flocks. Rarely vocalizes.

Toucan-Barbets

SEMNORNITHIDAE. The two members of this family are confined to the mountains of southern Central America and northwestern South America, respectively. Like the closely related toucans, they are mostly frugivorous, nest in tree cavities, and show little sexual dimorphism.

Prong-billed Barbet *Semnornis frantzii*

7 in (18 cm). No other CR species combines a **stout blue-gray bill** with an **ochraceous head and breast**. Common at middle elevations and in highlands from 2,600 to 7,900 ft (800 to 2,400 m). Inhabits epiphyte-laden montane wet forests and adjacent gardens, where the fast-paced, hollow-sounding, even-pitched duets of this species are a characteristic sound. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**



RAMPHASTIDAE. These quintessential Neotropical birds are readily recognized by their oversized beaks. Bill coloration is key to distinguishing between similar-looking species. Typically seen feeding at fruiting trees or calling from exposed perches, all members of the family are also predators that steal both eggs and nestlings of other birds, and opportunistically take insects and small vertebrates. Small groups of toucans usually fly in follow-the-leader fashion, with intervals of several seconds between each bird.

Emerald Toucanet *Aulacorhynchus prasinus*

12 in (30 cm). The only CR toucan with **green breast and belly**. The race that occurs in CR and western Panama has a distinctive **dark-blue throat**. Fairly common at middle elevations; from 2,600 to 7,900 ft (800 to 2,400 m). Forages at middle levels in montane wet forest and adjacent gardens and second growth. Quite vocal; most calls have a harsh, barking quality.

Collared Aracari *Pteroglossus torquatus*

16 in (41 cm). Distinguished from the Fiery-billed Aracari by mostly **chalky-white upper mandible** and black belly band (no range overlap). Common in Caribbean lowlands, and decreasingly common up into foothills; uncommon in northern Pacific, where usually found in gallery forest; to 3,300 ft (1,000 m). Small groups travel through mature wet forest, forest edge, and adjacent gardens. Most often heard vocalization is a high-pitched, two-note "hiccup."

Fiery-billed Aracari *Pteroglossus frantzii*

17 in (43 cm). The central and southern Pacific slope counterpart of the Collared Aracari, this species has a **red-orange upper mandible**. Additionally, the belly band is red, not black. Small groups travel through mature wet forest, forest edge, and adjacent gardens. The call is a high-pitched, two-note "hiccup." **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Yellow-eared Toucanet *Selenidera spectabilis*

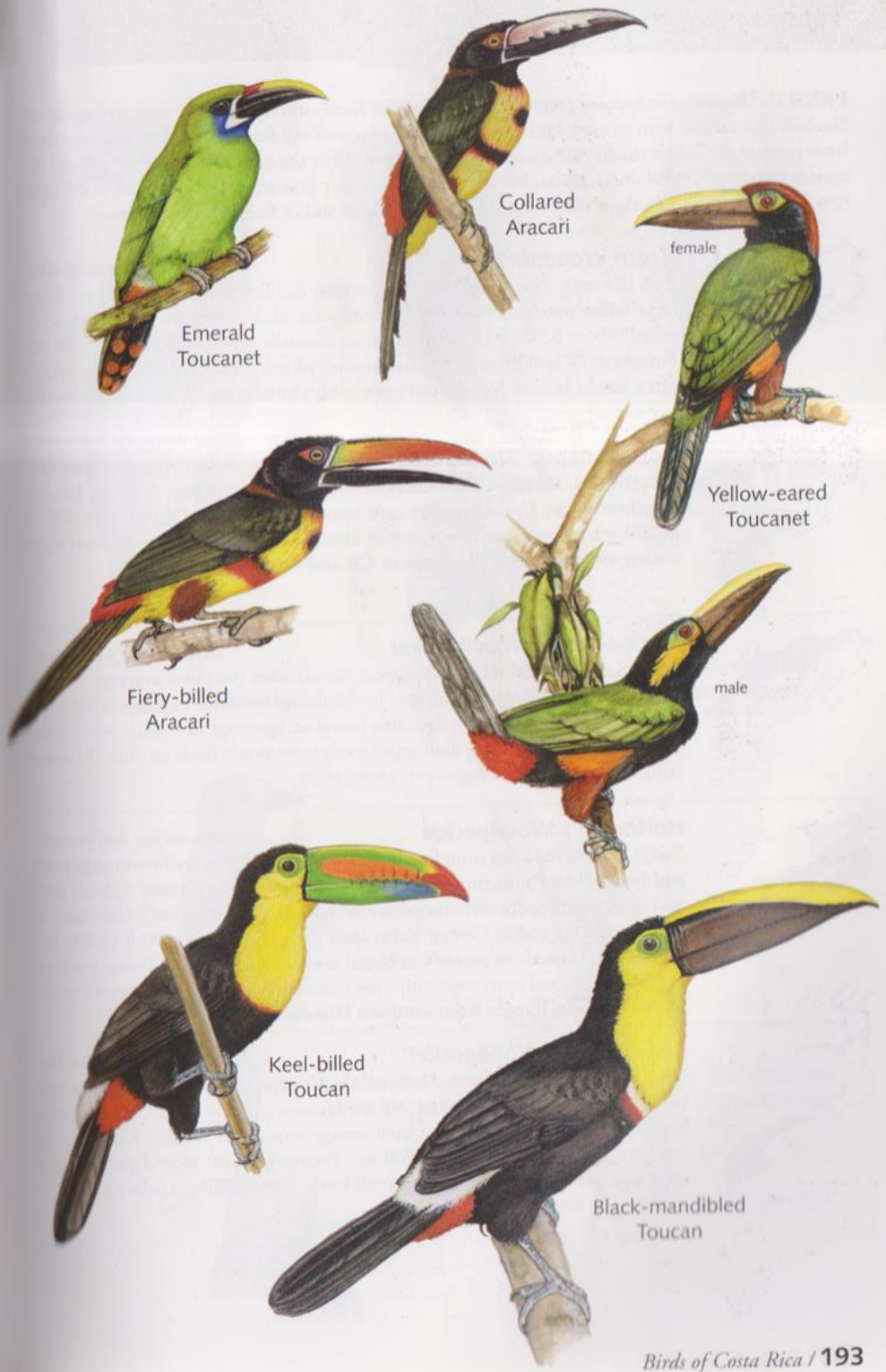
14 in (36 cm). The only CR toucan with an **entirely black throat, breast, and belly**. Also, the only CR toucan in which the sexes can be told apart in the field: male has yellow on side of head. Rare in Caribbean foothills and adjacent lowlands, also occurs on Pacific slope of Guanacaste Cordillera; from 300 to 3,900 ft (100 to 1,200 m). Forages at middle and upper levels of mature forest. Its grating, croaking call resembles that of the Keel-billed Toucan.

Keel-billed Toucan *Ramphastos sulfuratus*

18 in (46 cm). The **bright, multicolored bill** differentiates it from Black-mandibled Toucan. On Caribbean slope, common in lowlands and fairly common in foothills and middle elevations; on Pacific slope, rare in northern lowlands and fairly common at middle elevations (south to the Central Valley); to 4,600 ft (1,400 m). Inhabits forested and semi-open areas. Call is a dry, frog-like croak, repeated at length (similar to Yellow-eared Toucanet). The national bird of Belize.

Black-mandibled Toucan *Ramphastos ambiguus*

22 in (56 cm). The bicolored, **yellow and dark-brown bill** distinguishes it from the Keel-billed Toucan. On Caribbean and southern Pacific slopes, common in lowlands and decreasingly common up into middle elevations; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Inhabits forested and semi-open areas. Its song, a sonorous *tee de, te-de, te-de,* is one of the most common sounds in its range.



PICIDAE. The woodpeckers are a widespread and familiar family distinguished by their strong, chisel-like bills that enable them to peck into wood; they also have stiff tail feathers that help support them while perched on vertical trunks. Their presence is often detected by the sound of tapping on wood. Diet consists largely of wood-boring insects, but many species also eat fruit and even hawk insects in flight. Among CR species, males show more red markings on the head and/or face than do females.

Acorn Woodpecker *Melanerpes formicivorus*

9 in (23 cm). The **striking facial pattern** facilitates identification; in flight, large white patches on wings and rump are visible. Common in highlands, mostly above 5,900 ft (1,800 m), but occasionally down to 3,300 ft (1,000 m). Forages at all levels (including on ground) of oak forest and adjacent gardens; often hawks insects. Very vocal; commonly chortles a scratchy *wic-ka, wic-ka, wic-ka*.

Golden-naped Woodpecker *Melanerpes chrysauchen*

7 in (18 cm). Recalls a Black-cheeked Woodpecker (no range overlap), but has a **yellow nape**. Uncommon in wet forests of southern Pacific; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Forages at middle levels of forest and forest edge. Gives several short rattles: *wret, wret, wret*. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Black-cheeked Woodpecker *Melanerpes pucherani*

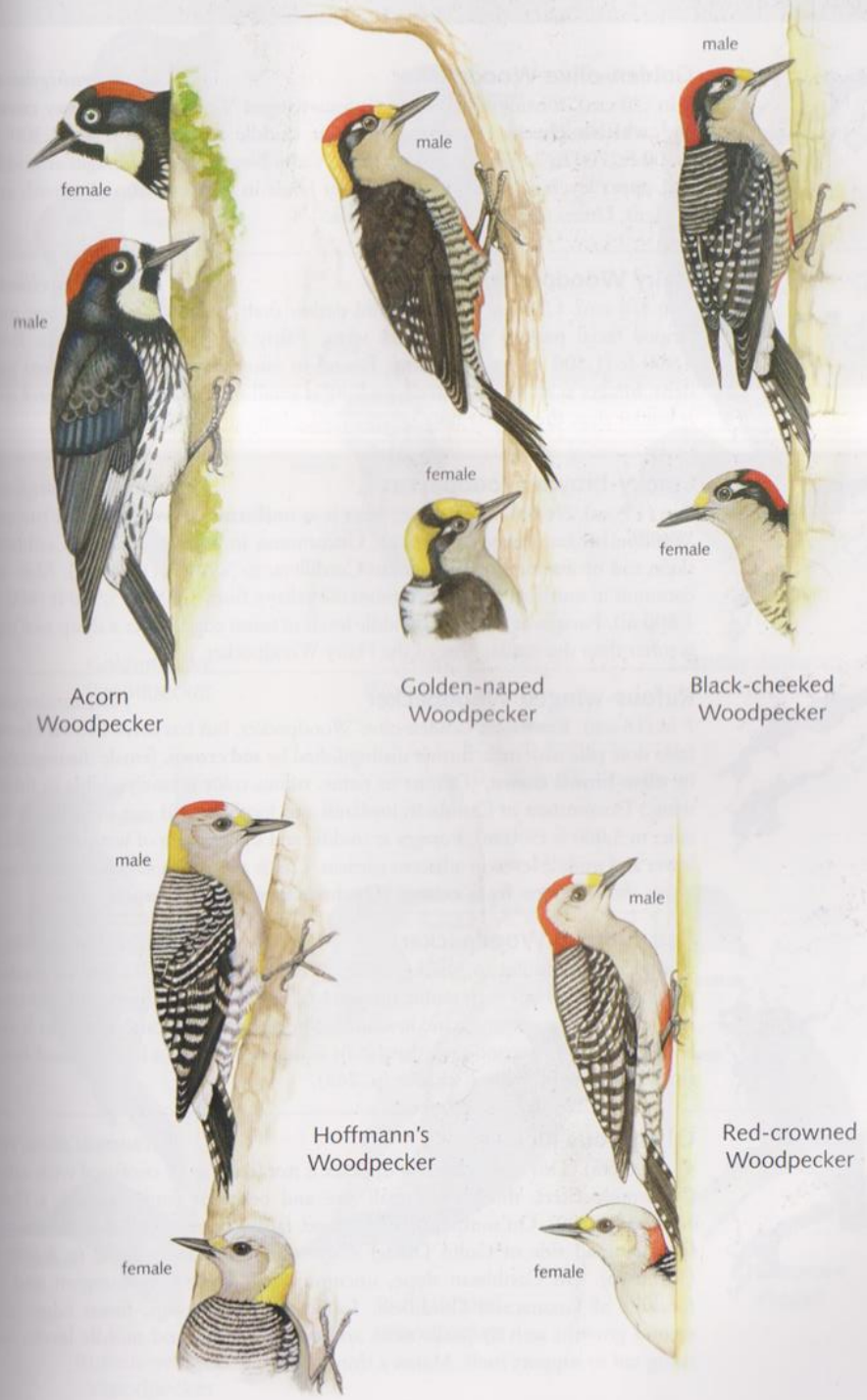
7 in (18 cm). Similar to Golden-naped Woodpecker (no range overlap), but has a **red nape**. Common in Caribbean lowlands and foothills; to 3,000 ft (900 m). Prefers gardens and forest edge; also found at openings in mature wet forest, where it forages at middle and upper levels; commonly feeds on fruit. Makes a fairly high-pitched, rattling *chirrr, chirrr, chirrr*.

Hoffmann's Woodpecker *Melanerpes hoffmannii*

7 in (18 cm). Told apart from Red-crowned Woodpecker by **yellow-orange nape and belly**. (Most birds from Carara NP to Quepos are apparently hybrids with Red-crowned Woodpecker; they have orange napes and bellies.) Common in northern Pacific and in Central Valley, east to Turrialba; to 6,600 ft (2,000 m); uncommon in northern central Caribbean lowlands and foothills. Prefers gardens, second growth, and open areas with a few trees; forages at all levels. Makes a harsh, sputtering rattle. **Ranges from southern Honduras to CR.**

Red-crowned Woodpecker *Melanerpes rubricapillus*

7 in (18 cm). Very similar to Hoffmann's Woodpecker, but has **red nape and belly**. (Most birds from Carara NP to Quepos are apparently hybrids with Hoffmann's Woodpecker; they have orange napes and bellies.) Common in southern Pacific; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Prefers gardens, second growth, and open areas with a few trees; forages at all levels. Utters a long, rattling chatter.



Golden-olive Woodpecker *Colaptes rubiginosus*

8 in (20 cm). Distinguished from Rufous-winged Woodpecker by **gray crown** and **whitish cheeks**. Fairly common at middle elevations, from 2,300 to 6,600 ft (700 to 2,000 m); also occurs in Caño Negro region. Forages at middle and upper levels of forest; often at lower levels in adjacent second growth and gardens. Utters a rising, sputtering rattle.

Hairy Woodpecker *Picoides villosus*

7 in (18 cm). CR race is smaller and darker than North American races; note striped facial pattern and all-dark wing. Fairly common in highlands, from 4,900 ft (1,500 m) to timberline. Found in montane forest and adjacent gardens; forages at all levels, actively pecking at small stems. Gives a sharp *speek* that is louder than the similar note of the Smoky-brown Woodpecker.

Smoky-brown Woodpecker *Picoides fumigatus*

6 in (15 cm). No other CR woodpecker is so **uniformly brown**; the Red-rumped Woodpecker has barred underparts. Uncommon in northern half of Caribbean slope and on Pacific slope of Tilarán Cordillera; to 5,900 ft (1,800 m). Also uncommon in southern Pacific intermontane valleys; from 1,300 to 5,900 ft (400 to 1,800 m). Forages at lower and middle levels of forest edge. Gives a sharp *zick* that is softer than the similar note of the Hairy Woodpecker.

Rufous-winged Woodpecker *Piculus simplex*

7 in (18 cm). Resembles Golden-olive Woodpecker, but has **olive-brown cheeks** (also note pale iris); male further distinguished by **red crown**, female distinguished by **olive-brown crown**. (Despite its name, rufous color is barely visible in folded wing.) Uncommon in Caribbean lowlands and foothills, and rare in southern Pacific; to 3,000 ft (900 m). Forages at middle and upper levels of wet forest, and at lower and middle levels in adjacent gardens. Call is a vigorous, jay-like *cheea, cheea, cheea, cheea*. **Ranges from eastern Honduras to western Panama.**

Red-rumped Woodpecker *Veniliornis kirkii*

6 in (15 cm). Similar to Smoky-brown Woodpecker, but with **barred underparts** (red rump not very visible on perched bird). Rare in southern Caribbean lowlands and southern Pacific lowlands. Forages in forest canopy and at lower levels of adjacent second growth; also in mangroves. Gives a falling, nasal *keeer*, similar to note of Great Kiskadee (p. 248).

Olivaceous Piculet *Picumnus olivaceus*

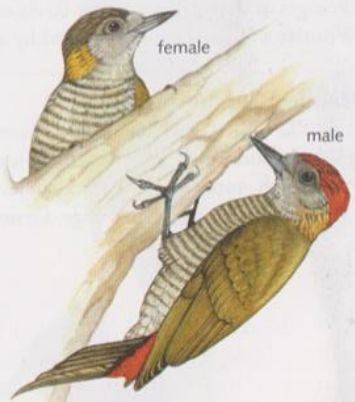
4 in (10 cm). This miniature woodpecker is not likely to be confused with other CR woodpeckers, though its small size and behavior could suggest a Plain Xenops (p. 200). On southern Pacific slope, fairly common in lowlands (except for mainland side of Golfo Dulce) and in intermontane valleys; to 4,600 ft (1,400 m). On Caribbean slope, uncommon in Caño Negro region and in foothills of Guanacaste Cordillera. Favors forest openings, forest edge, and second growth; actively pecks vines and twigs at lower and middle levels, not using tail to support itself. Makes a thin twittering sound.

Golden-olive Woodpecker

Hairy Woodpecker

Smoky-brown Woodpecker

Rufous-winged Woodpecker



Red-rumped Woodpecker

Olivaceous Piculet

Lineated Woodpecker *Dryocopus lineatus*

13 in (33 cm). Combination of **red crest** and **white stripe that begins at base of dark bill** distinguishes both sexes from similar Pale-billed Woodpecker. (Be aware that lighting can sometimes make it difficult to determine bill color on these two species.) Fairly common from lowlands to middle elevations; to 4,600 ft (1,400 m). Generally prefers more open habitat than Pale-billed Woodpecker; forages at all levels. Gives an emphatic *WICK-WICK-WICK-WICK...*

Pale-billed Woodpecker *Campephilus guatemalensis*

13 in (33 cm). Both sexes have noticeably more **red on head** than the red-crested Lineated Woodpecker. Further distinguished by white stripe that begins on neck (not on face) and by whitish bill. Common in lowlands, uncommon in foothills and middle elevations; to 4,600 ft (1,400 m). More commonly found in forest habitat than the Lineated Woodpecker; forages at all levels of forest, occasionally visits forest edge and adjacent gardens. Its characteristic sound is a loud, sharp, double rap; its call is a sputtering, laughing rattle.

Cinnamon Woodpecker *Celeus loricatus*

8 in (20 cm). Similar to Chestnut-colored Woodpecker, but **head and back are the same color**, and the underparts are lighter than the back. Fairly common in lowlands and foothills of Caribbean slope; to 3,000 ft (900 m). Found in forest canopy; drops to lower levels at forest edge and in adjacent second growth. Call is a forceful *DWEE, DWEE, DWE-DWIT*; the last two notes each slightly lower pitched.

Chestnut-colored Woodpecker *Celeus castaneus*

9 in (23 cm). Similar to Cinnamon Woodpecker, but the **head is paler than the back**, and the back and underparts are the same chestnut color. Fairly common in Caribbean lowlands and uncommon in adjacent foothills; to 2,300 ft (700 m). Forages at middle and upper levels of forest, forest edge, and nearby gardens. Whistles a falling *skeew* succeeded by a nasal *keh, keh, keh.*

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker *Sphyrapicus varius*

8 in (20 cm). The **white wing patch** is diagnostic in all plumages. In CR, adult females are seen more often than males or juveniles. An uncommon migrant from Oct to March, most likely at middle elevations and in highlands, rare in lowlands. Favors gardens and forest edge. Generally does not vocalize in CR.

Lineated Woodpecker

Pale-billed Woodpecker

Cinnamon Woodpecker

Chestnut-colored Woodpecker

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

FURNARIIDAE. A large and varied family of essentially insectivorous Neotropical birds. Until recently, woodcreepers (including scythebills) were placed in a separate family, Dendrocolaptidae. All other members of this family are known collectively as *ovenbirds*, though none of the species bear that name (the term *ovenbird* derives from a South American genus—the horneros—whose members construct mud nests resembling small clay ovens). Most members of this family are attired predominantly in shades of brown. Their habits and habitats are diverse, though many favor the company of mixed species flocks. The majority of ovenbirds dwell in middle and upper elevation forests; most woodcreepers, in turn, occur in lowland forest.

Plain Xenops *Xenops minutus*

5 in (13 cm). The prominent **white malar stripe** and **short, upturned bill** are distinctive; plain underparts separate it from Streaked Xenops. Fairly common in lowlands and foothills of southern Pacific, rare in northern Pacific; on Caribbean slope, uncommon in lowlands and foothills; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Forages at all levels of mature wet forest, forest edge, second growth, and gardens; behaves like an Olivaceous Piculet (p. 196), pecking into vines and dead twigs. Accompanies mixed flocks. Gives a fast, high-pitched trill.

Streaked Xenops *Xenops rutilans*

5 in (13 cm). Resembles Plain Xenops, but has **streaked underparts**. Rare in middle elevations and highlands, from Central Cordillera south; from 3,900 to 8,200 ft (1,200 to 2,500 m). Forages at all levels in mature forest, advanced second growth, and at forest edge; behaves much like a Plain Xenops. The call consists of two to six thin, hissing notes.

[Adapted for climbing up tree trunks, woodcreepers superficially resemble woodpeckers, although they glean and probe for their prey, rather than peck into wood. All CR woodcreepers have rufous wings and tail, so it is necessary to concentrate on other field marks for species identification. Bill shape, size, and color are very important; also note any markings on the head and underparts (e.g., streaking, spotting, barring, eye ring, eye line, and malar stripe).]

Northern Barred-Woodcreeper *Dendrocolaptes sanctithomae*

11 in (28 cm). **Fine black barring on brown head, back, and underparts** is diagnostic, but can be difficult to detect in dim light; has straight, stout, dark bill. On both slopes, common in wet lowlands and uncommon in foothills, to 4,300 ft (1,300 m); rare in dry lowlands. Forages at lower and middle levels of mature forest, advanced second growth, and adjacent gardens; often accompanies army-ant swarms. Calls at dawn and dusk with a penetrating *doh-wee, doh-wee, doh-wee, doh-wee*, each part upslurred; call is similar to that of Tawny-crowned Greenlet (p. 288).

Black-banded Woodcreeper *Dendrocolaptes picumnus*

11 in (28 cm). The only CR woodcreeper with **streaked breast** and **barred belly**; also note stout, dusky bill. Rare in foothills and middle elevations of Caribbean slope, from 1,600 to 6,600 ft (500 to 2,000 m); also rare on Pacific slope of Tilarán Cordillera and in Dota region, from 4,900 to 6,600 ft (1,500 to 2,000 m). Forages at all levels in mature wet forest. Sings a fast series of twelve or more notes, which diminish in pitch and intensity.

Plain Xenops

Streaked Xenops

Northern Barred-Woodcreeper

Black-banded Woodcreeper

Olivaceous Woodcreeper *Sittasomus griseicapillus*

6 in (15 cm). **Unpatterned gray head and underparts** are diagnostic; has short, straight, dark bill. Fairly common at middle elevations on Pacific slope, uncommon in northern Pacific lowlands (including mangroves) and at middle elevations on Caribbean slope; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Forages actively at middle levels in relatively open areas within forest and at forest edge. Gives a high, rapid, rattling trill.

Long-tailed Woodcreeper *Deconychura longicauda*

7 in (18 cm). Brown breast with buffy spots and a bicolored bill with pale lower mandible could suggest a Spotted Woodcreeper (p. 204), but note **plain-brown back** and thinner bill. Uncommon in southern Pacific lowlands; rare in foothills of Caribbean and southern Pacific slopes, from 1,300 to 3,900 ft (400 to 1,200 m). Forages mostly at lower levels in mature wet forest.

Wedge-billed Woodcreeper *Glyphorynchus spirurus*

6 in (15 cm). Told apart from other woodcreepers by **short bill with slightly upturned lower mandible**. Common from lowlands to middle elevations on Caribbean and southern Pacific slopes; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Forages at lower and middle levels of mature wet forest and advanced second growth. Sings a quick *widididididi* that falls then rises.

Plain-brown Woodcreeper *Dendrocincla fuliginosa*

8 in (20 cm). Has **straight, black bill**; an essentially unmarked bird, though note **dark malar stripe** separating **pale cheeks and throat**. Uncommon in wet Caribbean lowlands and foothills; to 3,000 ft (900 m). Forages at lower and middle levels of mature forest and advanced second growth; often accompanies army-ant swarms. Call is a sharp, metallic *speeyk*.

Tawny-winged Woodcreeper *Dendrocincla anabatina*

7 in (18 cm). Has **straight, black bill**; rufous wings and tail contrast with olive-brown upperparts; note pale-buffy throat. Fairly common from lowlands to middle elevations on southern Pacific slope; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Forages at lower and middle levels of mature wet forest and advanced second growth, also in mangroves; often accompanies army-ant swarms. Song is a lengthy, agitated *whe-whe-whe-whe...*, lasting up to a minute.

Ruddy Woodcreeper *Dendrocincla homochroa*

8 in (20 cm). No other woodcreeper is so **uniformly rufous**; also note straight, dusky bill and **gray lores**. Fairly common in northern Pacific foothills and southern Pacific intermontane valleys, from 1,600 to 4,600 ft (500 to 1,400 m); uncommon to rare in Pacific lowlands, Caribbean foothills, and Caño Negro region. Forages in lower levels of humid and dry forests; regularly accompanies army-ant swarms. Song is a dry, crescendoing rattle that can last up to twenty seconds.

Olivaceous Woodcreeper

Long-tailed Woodcreeper

Wedge-billed Woodcreeper

Plain-brown Woodcreeper

Tawny-winged Woodcreeper

Ruddy Woodcreeper

Cocoa Woodcreeper *Xiphorhynchus susurrans*
9 in (23 cm). Resembles Streak-headed and Ivory-billed Woodcreepers, but has **straight, stout, bicolored bill**. Common in wet lowlands and foothills, to 3,000 ft (900 m); rare in dry lowlands. Forages at all levels of forest edge, second growth, and gardens; occasionally found in mature forest. Very vocal, but typically calls hidden from view; gives a series of seven or more emphatic notes (*WHEET, WHEET, WHEET...*), rising slightly then falling off at the end.

Ivory-billed Woodcreeper *Xiphorhynchus flavigaster*
9 in (23 cm). Similar to Streak-headed and Cocoa Woodcreepers, but has **straight, stout, pale bill**; also note dusky malar stripe. Uncommon in northern Pacific lowlands and foothills, rare in Caño Negro region; to 3,000 ft (900 m). Frequently forages on major limbs of trees in evergreen forest and at forest edge. Gives a loud, descending, laughing whinny.

Black-striped Woodcreeper *Xiphorhynchus lachrymosus*
9 in (23 cm). The **bold scaling on head, back, and underparts** is diagnostic. Uncommon in wet lowlands, rare in adjacent foothills; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Forages in middle and upper levels of mature wet forest and at forest edge. Sings a jerky, descending, laughing whinny.

Spotted Woodcreeper *Xiphorhynchus erythropygius*
9 in (23 cm). Has more obvious **eye ring** than any other CR woodcreeper; **olive-brown underparts have buffy spots**; bicolored bill is stout and straight. Similar to Long-tailed Woodcreeper (p. 202), but has thicker bill and streaking on back. Common at middle elevations, from 2,600 to 5,600 ft (800 to 1,700 m); uncommon in foothills, and rare in wet lowlands. Forages at all levels in mature wet forest and advanced second growth; often with mixed flocks. Gives two or three slurred, descending whistles, each slightly lower pitched.

Streak-headed Woodcreeper *Lepidocolaptes souleyetii*
8 in (20 cm). Very similar to the Spot-crowned Woodcreeper, but note **pinkish-brown bill** and **streaked crown** (not spotted); also note that there is very little range overlap. The shape of the bill (thin, decurved) distinguishes this species from the Cocoa and Ivory-billed Woodcreepers. Common and widespread in lowlands; uncommon in foothills and middle elevations; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Forages at all levels in garden habitats. Gives a two- or three-second, descending trill.

Spot-crowned Woodcreeper *Lepidocolaptes affinis*
8 in (20 cm). Has **slender, decurved, pale bill** and **spotted crown**. One of three CR woodcreepers found above 5,600 ft (1,700 m). (Strong-billed Woodcreeper [p. 206] and Black-banded Woodcreeper [p. 200] are both very rare.) Also compare with Streak-headed Woodcreeper. Fairly common in Talamanca Cordillera and uncommon in Central Cordillera, from timberline down to 4,900 ft (1,500 m), rarely as low as 3,300 ft (1,000 m). Forages at all levels, both in garden habitats and mature oak forest; often accompanies mixed flocks. Gives one or two high, nasal squeaks followed by a fairly even, two- or three-second trill that drops off and slows slightly at the very end.

Cocoa Woodcreeper

Ivory-billed Woodcreeper

Black-striped Woodcreeper

Spotted Woodcreeper

Streak-headed Woodcreeper

Spot-crowned Woodcreeper

Brown-billed Scythebill *Campylorhamphus pusillus*

9 in (23 cm). The **long, slim, extremely decurved bill** is diagnostic. Uncommon in Caribbean foothills and middle elevations, from Tilarán Cordillera south; from 1,000 to 4,900 ft (300 to 1,500 m). Rare in Pacific foothills and middle elevations, from Dota region south; from 1,000 to 8,200 ft (300 to 2,500 m); also rare on Osa Peninsula and around Golfo Dulce. Forages at all levels in mature wet forest; often accompanies mixed flocks. Whistles a stuttering series of loud, cascading notes (lasting five seconds).

Strong-billed Woodcreeper *Xiphocolaptes promeropirhynchus*

12 in (30 cm). This bird has a **stout bill** that is slightly decurved and laterally compressed. Rare in foothills and middle elevations of Caribbean slope, from Tilarán Cordillera south; also rare on southern Pacific slope of Talamanca Cordillera; from 1,600 to 5,600 ft (500 to 1,700 m). Inhabits mature wet forest; often begins foraging near the base of a tree and works its way far up the trunk. At dawn and dusk, repeats a loud *KEW-WEE* about ten times.

[The three CR leaftossers are all quite similar. They are best distinguished by throat color, though that can be difficult to see as these are birds that hop about the dimly lit forest floor. Could be mistaken for a thrush (p. 266), but a leaftosser is plumper and has shorter legs and a longer bill.]

Tawny-throated Leaftosser *Sclerurus mexicanus*

6 in (15 cm). Similar to Scaly-throated and Gray-throated Leaftossers, but the **tawny throat** is diagnostic. Uncommon at middle elevations; from 2,300 to 5,900 ft (700 to 1,800 m). Forages on the ground in mature wet forest by flicking leaves with its bill. Whistles four or more thin, wheezy, descending notes, each slightly shorter than the previous.

Gray-throated Leaftosser *Sclerurus albigularis*

6 in (15 cm). Similar to both Scaly-throated and Tawny-throated Leaftossers, but note **gray throat** and **reddish-brown breast**. Uncommon at middle elevations in northern half of CR; from 2,000 to 4,900 ft (600 to 1,500 m). Forages on the ground in mature wet forest by flicking leaves with its bill. Repeats a quick phrase of five to seven notes, the first three or four high descending notes are followed by one or two sharp, higher notes.

Scaly-throated Leaftosser *Sclerurus guatemalensis*

6 in (15 cm). Has **scalloped pattern on white throat** and on brown breast and sides of head; **lacks rufous rump** of the Gray-throated Leaftosser and Tawny-throated Leaftosser. Uncommon in wet lowlands and foothills of both slopes; to 3,300 ft (1,000 m). Forages on the ground in mature forest by flicking leaves with its bill. Sings a fairly high-pitched song lasting three seconds and increasing in pitch and volume, then dropping, with the last three or four notes lower and weaker.

Brown-billed Scythebill

Strong-billed Woodcreeper

Tawny-throated Leaftosser

Scaly-throated Leaftosser

Gray-throated Leaftosser

Striped Woodhaunter *Hyloctistes subulatus*
7 in (18 cm). Similar to Lineated Foliage-gleaner (p. 210), but has **blurred streaking on breast**; also similar in pattern to several woodcreepers, but does not climb up tree trunks. On Caribbean and southern Pacific slopes, uncommon in foothills and middle elevations (from 1,300 to 3,900 ft [400 to 1,200 m]), and rare in wet lowlands. Inhabits lower and middle levels of mature forest. Pokes into dead leaf clusters and epiphytes; accompanies mixed flocks. Utters a loud *kyip-kyip-kyip-kyip-kyip*.

Scaly-throated Foliage-gleaner *Anabacerthia variegaticeps*
6 in (15 cm). Similar to Buff-throated Foliage-gleaner, but **eye ring and superciliary are orangish**; scaling on throat is faint. Rare at middle elevations; from 2,600 to 5,900 ft (800 to 1,800 m). Forages in leaf clusters, epiphytes, and vines at middle levels of mature wet forest and advanced second growth; accompanies mixed flocks. Call is a loud, sharp squeak.

Buff-fronted Foliage-gleaner *Philydor rufum*
7 in (18 cm). The **ochraceous forehead, superciliary, and underparts** distinguish it from other furnariids. Rare at middle elevations; from 2,600 to 7,500 ft (800 to 2,300 m). Forages actively in middle levels of wet forest; accompanies mixed flocks. Calls with a hard *skik*.

Buff-throated Foliage-gleaner *Automolus ochrolaemus*
7 in (18 cm). Similar to Scaly-throated Foliage-gleaner, but **eye ring and superciliary are buffy**. Fairly common from lowlands to middle elevations; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Actively forages in dense undergrowth of mature wet forest and adjacent advanced second growth; accompanies mixed flocks. Gives a sputtering, nasal trill that slows and drops slightly at the end.

Ruddy Foliage-gleaner *Automolus rubiginosus*
8 in (20 cm). A dark reddish-brown foliage-gleaner with underparts lighter than rest of body. Uncommon in the hills surrounding the Coto Brus Valley; from 3,600 to 4,600 ft (1,100 to 1,400 m). Also, unconfirmed reports from Monteverde area. Actively forages in dense undergrowth and lower levels of mature humid forest and adjacent advanced second growth; often in pairs. Whistles a nasal *ka-kwik*.

Striped Woodhaunter

Scaly-throated Foliage-gleaner

Buff-fronted Foliage-gleaner

Buff-throated Foliage-gleaner

Ruddy Foliage-gleaner

Spotted Barbtail *Premnoplex brunnescens*

6 in (15 cm). No other CR furnariid combines such **dark brown** plumage with **buffy spots on underparts**; note **pale-tawny throat**. Common from foothills to highlands; from 1,600 to 7,500 ft (500 to 2,300 m). Climbs trunks and hangs upside-down below limbs in lower and middle levels of mature wet forest, advanced second growth, and forest edge; accompanies mixed flocks. Produces a sharp *speep!*, followed by a very rapid string of slightly duller, drier notes.

Ruddy Treerunner *Margarornis rubiginosus*

6 in (15 cm). No other CR furnariid is so **uniformly reddish-brown** with **whitish throat and superciliary**. Common in highlands; from 4,900 ft (1,500 m) to timberline. Forages in moss and epiphytes at all levels of wet montane forest, forest edge, and adjacent gardens. Climbs trunks and hangs upside-down below limbs; accompanies mixed flocks. Rapidly twitters high, thin notes. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Buffy Tuftedcheek *Pseudocolaptes lawrencii*

8 in (20 cm). The **buffy throat and flared-out cheek feathers** readily distinguish it; no other CR furnariid has **wing bars**. Uncommon in highlands; from 5,200 ft (1,600 m) to timberline. Forages actively and noisily in epiphytes (especially bromeliads), in wet montane forest, forest edge, and adjacent gardens. Call note is a sharp *sfik!*

Lineated Foliage-gleaner *Syndactyla subalaris*

7 in (18 cm). Resembles Striped Woodhaunter (p. 208), but has **crisp, pale buffy streaking on breast**. Juvenile, with its tawny throat, resembles larger Streak-breasted Treehunter, but has **tawny postocular stripe**. Uncommon in middle elevations and highlands, from 4,600 to 7,200 ft (1,400 to 2,200 m); rare down to 2,600 ft (800 m). Favors lower and middle levels of openings in mature wet forest. Pokes into dead leaf clusters and epiphytes; accompanies mixed flocks. Gives a crescendoing series of about ten rapid, dry notes.

Streak-breasted Treehunter *Thripadectes rufobrunneus*

8 in (20 cm). The **tawny throat** and **streaked breast** distinguish this large, dark furnariid. Somewhat similar juvenile Lineated Foliage-gleaner has tawny postocular stripe. Fairly common in middle elevations and highlands; from 3,900 to 8,200 ft (1,200 to 2,500 m). Actively forages in dense undergrowth and lower levels of mature wet forest and adjacent advanced second growth; accompanies mixed flocks. Utters a scratchy *cheh-brah, cheh-brah, cheh-brah...*, with a scolding quality. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Ovenbirds, Woodcreepers

Pale-breasted Spinetail *Synallaxis albescens*

6 in (15 cm). The **proportionately long tail** and **rufous crown and wing coverts** distinguish it from all but the much darker Slaty Spinetail. Fairly common in brushy fields of southern Pacific slope; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Usually stays low and hidden in vegetation, but sings from exposed perches. Tirelessly utters a sharp, scratchy *zwee-bit, zweebit.*

Slaty Spinetail *Synallaxis brachyura*

6 in (15 cm). Similar to Pale-breasted Spinetail, but nonrufous parts are **dark sooty gray**. Common in wet lowlands and up into middle elevations; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Dwells in low overgrown tangles in open areas and, unlike Pale-breasted Spinetail, sings from a concealed perch. Repeatedly gives a somewhat wren-like, descending, stuttering *ch-ch-ch-chirrr.*

Red-faced Spinetail *Cranioleuca erythrops*

6 in (15 cm). **Rufous wings, tail, and half-hood** contrast with mostly olive-brown body. Fairly common at middle elevations; from 2,300 to 6,600 ft (700 to 2,000 m). Forages acrobatically on mossy limbs of mature wet forest and at forest edge, mostly at middle levels; often rummages in dead leaf clusters; accompanies mixed flocks. Delivers a high, rapid, slightly descending series of staccato notes.

Typical Antbirds

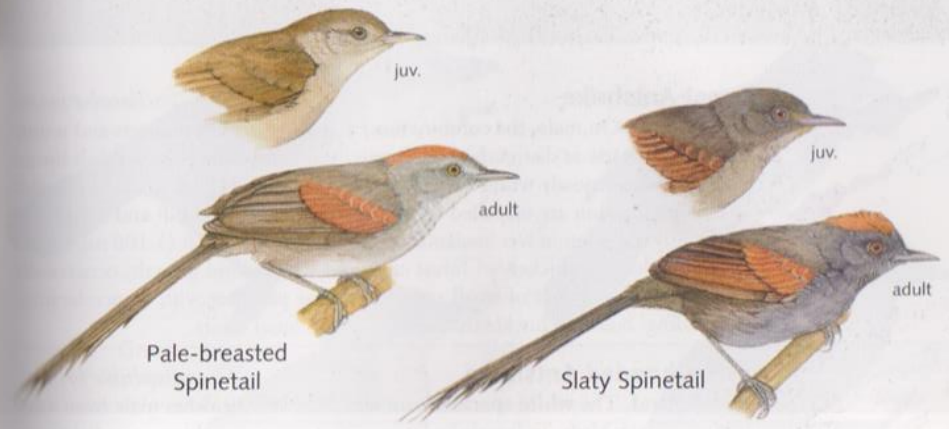
THAMNOPHILIDAE. Most members of this large Neotropical family live in forests, where their overall dark coloration blends well with the shadows. Many are quite vocal, which aids greatly in locating them. None routinely eat ants—the common name *antbird* derives from the fact that a few species habitually follow foraging army ants, which flush out hidden arthropods that the birds eagerly consume. Encountering an ant swarm attended by a variety of antbirds and other species is one of the great Neotropical birding experiences.

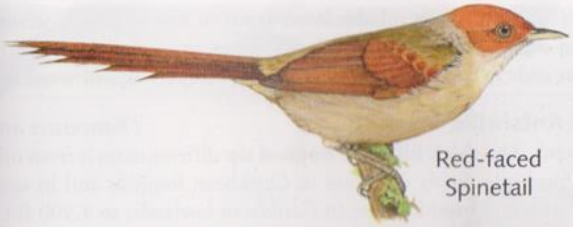
Fasciated Antshrike *Cymbilaimus lineatus*

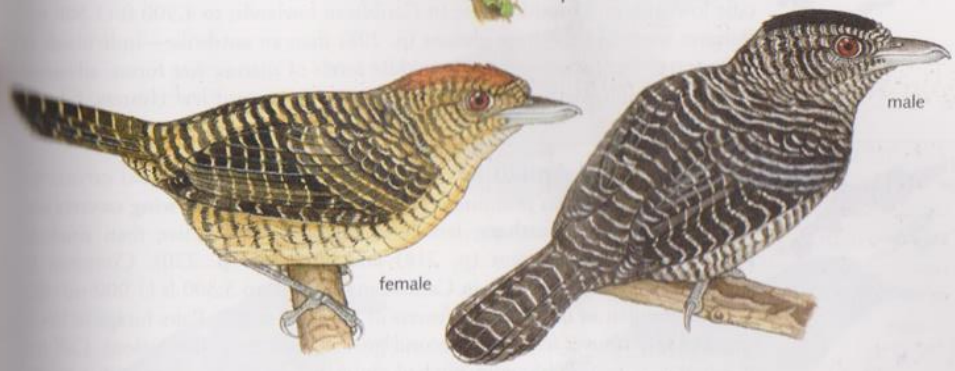
7 in (18 cm). Male resembles male Barred Antshrike, but is more finely barred and has **red iris**; female is more or less a brownish version of the male. Fairly common in wet Caribbean lowlands, rare in Caño Negro region and foothills; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Pairs hop methodically through tangled vegetation at lower and middle levels of forest edge and second growth. Delivers four to eight clear notes (*kwew, kwew, kwew, kwew*) at the same pitch, but each note rises at the end.

Barred Antshrike *Thamnophilus doliatus*

6 in (15 cm). Male similar to male Fasciated Antshrike, but with broader white barring and **pale-yellow iris**; female is only cinnamon-rufous bird in CR with **streaked sides of head**. Common in northern Pacific and Caño Negro regions; uncommon in wet lowlands and foothills; to 4,600 ft (1,400 m). Pairs typically stay low in thickets, forest edge, and second growth. Call is a fast-paced series of chuckling notes that accelerates before ending in a higher-pitched, nasal *wek!*







Great Antshrike *Taraba major*

8 in (20 cm). On male, the combination of mostly black upperparts and mostly white underparts is distinctive; on female, the combination of reddish-brown upperparts and mostly white underparts is distinctive. In both sexes, any doubts as to identification are dispelled by the heavy, hook-tipped bill and **bright-red iris**. Fairly common in wet lowlands and foothills; to 3,600 ft (1,100 m). Prefers dense tangles and thickets of forest edge and new second growth, occasionally rises to lower branches of small trees. Proclaims presence with an accelerating, descending, bouncy chuckle that ends in a soft, nasal *wrray*.

Black-hooded Antshrike *Thamnophilus bridgesi*

6 in (15 cm). The **white speckling on shoulder** distinguishes male from other basically black birds. In female, pale streaking on head and breast is diagnostic. Common in southern Pacific; rare north of Carara NP, to Tenorio Volcano; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Pairs inhabit lower levels of mature forest, second growth, and forest edge; often with mixed flocks. Gives an accelerating series of staccato notes that ends in a longer, lower note. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Russet Antshrike *Thamnistes anabatinus*

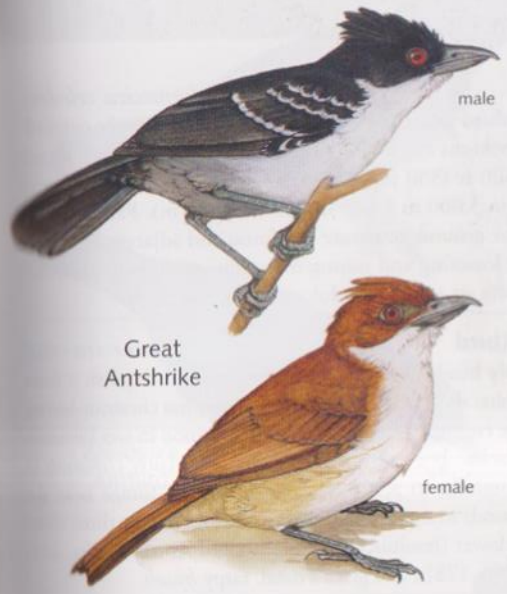
6 in (15 cm). The **thick bill with hooked tip** differentiates it from other cinnamon/rufous birds. Fairly common in Caribbean foothills and in southern Pacific lowlands and foothills, rare in Caribbean lowlands; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Behaves more like a foliage-gleaner (p. 208) than an antshrike—individuals or pairs travel with mixed flocks in middle levels of mature wet forest, advanced second growth, and forest edge, often poking into dead leaf clusters. Gives a thin *tsweetsip*.

Black-crowned Antshrike *Thamnophilus atrinucha*

6 in (15 cm). Male has prominent **white spotting on tips of wing coverts** and **white tips on tail feathers**; female is larger and less active than similarly plumaged female antvireos (p. 218) and antwrens (p. 220). Common in Caribbean lowlands and rare in Caribbean foothills, to 3,300 ft (1,000 m); also a small population in evergreen forests of Santa Rosa NP. Pairs forage in lower levels of mature wet forest, tall second growth, and cacao plantations. Call is a fast-paced series of fairly even-pitched chuckling notes that ends with a single, higher-pitched *wek!*

Dusky Antbird *Cercomacra tyrannina*

6 in (15 cm). Compared to smaller Slaty Antwren (p. 220), note proportionately longer tail. Common in wet lowlands and foothills of Caribbean and southern Pacific slopes, rare north of Carara NP; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Rather wren-like; pairs favor dense vegetation at lower levels of forest openings, forest edge, and second growth. Frequently gives a series of emphatic staccato notes, the first three rising slightly in pitch, then leveling and accelerating slightly.



Zeledon's Antbird *Myrmeciza zeledoni*

7 in (18 cm). No other antbird with **blue orbital skin** is so **uniformly colored**. Uncommon at middle elevations of Caribbean slope (from Miravalles Volcano south), from 1,600 to 5,600 ft (500 to 1,700 m); rare at middle elevations of southern Pacific slope, from 3,000 to 5,600 ft (900 to 1,700 m). Pairs or small groups forage on or near the ground in mature wet forest and adjacent advanced second growth, habitually lowering and raising their tails; often with army-ant swarms. Quite noisy; intones six to ten forceful, even-pitched notes.

Chestnut-backed Antbird *Myrmeciza exsul*

6 in (15 cm). The **dark-slaty head** and **chestnut-brown back** distinguish it from other antbirds with blue orbital skin. Female of Caribbean race has chestnut-brown underparts; female of Pacific race has rufous underparts. Common in wet lowlands and foothills of southern Pacific, but rare north of Carara NP; fairly common in Caribbean lowlands and foothills; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Pairs forage near the ground (or even on the ground) in mature wet forest. Whistles two or three clear, labored notes, the last one lower (reminiscent of Black-faced Antthrush [p. 224] and Black-throated Trogon [p. 178]); also gives a nasal, raspy *hyaah*.

Bare-crowned Antbird *Gymnocichla nudiceps*

6 in (15 cm). **Bare blue forecrown** on male is diagnostic; **rufous wing bars and underparts** set female apart from other antbirds with blue orbital skin. Common in Caño Negro region, uncommon in wet lowlands of Caribbean and southern Pacific, rare in foothills; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Pairs stay low in dense growth of forest openings, forest edge, and second growth. Particularly fond of *Heliconia* thickets; joins army-ant swarms. Delivers a series of even-pitched whistled notes that accelerates and weakens toward end.

Bicolored Antbird *Gymnopithys leucaspis*

6 in (15 cm). The mostly **white underparts** differentiate it from other antbirds with blue orbital skin. Uncommon in wet lowlands and foothills of Caribbean and southern Pacific slopes, to 5,200 ft (1,600 m); rare on Pacific slope of Guanacaste Cordillera. Pairs or small groups forage near the ground in mature wet forest and adjacent advanced second growth, almost exclusively at army-ant swarms. Frequently utters a harsh *nhyarr*; sings a series of high notes that increase in pitch and pace, then slow down and descend (similar to song of Ocellated Antbird).

Ocellated Antbird *Phaenostictus mcleannani*

8 in (20 cm). This striking antbird has an **extended blue orbital area** and bold **scalloping** on back and underparts. Uncommon in Caribbean lowlands and foothills; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Pairs or small groups forage near the ground in mature wet forest and adjacent advanced second growth, almost exclusively at army-ant swarms. Song quite similar to that of Bicolored Antbird, but more dulcet; also gives a descending, buzzy *dzjeer*.

Dull-mantled Antbird *Myrmeciza laemosticta*

6 in (15 cm). Told apart from other dark-brown birds by its **red iris** and **white spotting on shoulders**. Fairly common in Caribbean foothills; from 1,000 to 3,000 ft (300 to 900 m). Forages on or near the ground in dense vegetation, mostly along streams and ravines in mature wet forest. Sings a series of about eight high, emphatic whistled notes, the first two or three upwardly inflected, and the remaining notes downwardly inflected; also utters a shrill, blurred downwardly inflected *bzhew*.

Spotted Antbird *Hylophylax naevioides*

4 in (10 cm). Bold spotting on breast of male is distinctive; female is similarly patterned, but much duller. Common on both slopes of Guanacaste Cordillera, from 2,000 to 2,600 ft (600 to 800 m); uncommon elsewhere in Caribbean lowlands and foothills, to 3,300 ft (1,000 m). Individuals and pairs forage in the understory of mature wet and humid forests and adjacent advanced second growth, very often with army ants. Sings a soft, sweet, buzzy, descending series of eight to ten slurred notes: *zpeeda, zpeeda, zpeeda...*

Plain Antvireo *Dysithamnus mentalis*

4 in (10 cm). Female resembles Tawny-crowned Greenlet (p. 288), but has **dark iris**. Male told apart from male Spot-crowned Antvireo by **plain crown and breast**. Fairly common in Caribbean foothills and middle elevations, from 1,300 to 4,900 ft (400 to 1,500 m); rare in adjacent lowlands. On Pacific slope, fairly common in southern foothills and middle elevations and in higher portions of Tilarán Cordillera, rarely as high as 8,200 ft (2,500 m); uncommon in lowlands north to Parrita. Pairs inhabit understory of mature wet forest and advanced second growth. Song is a series of accelerating and descending chuckling notes.

Spot-crowned Antvireo *Dysithamnus puncticeps*

4 in (10 cm). Both sexes resemble Streak-crowned Antvireo (little range overlap), but have **indistinct streaking on throat and breast**. Male resembles male Plain Antvireo, but note spots on crown. Uncommon in southern Caribbean lowlands and foothills, south of Limón; to 2,600 ft (800 m). Pairs and small groups forage at lower levels of mature wet forest and adjacent gardens. Delivers a fast, rolling series of notes that rise, level off, then descend as they increase in tempo.

Streak-crowned Antvireo *Dysithamnus striaticeps*

4 in (10 cm). Both sexes resemble Spot-crowned Antvireo (little range overlap), but have **distinct streaking on throat and breast**. Fairly common in Caribbean foothills, to 2,600 ft (800 m); rare in Caribbean lowlands, south to about Limón. Pairs join mixed flocks in lower and middle levels of mature wet forest and adjacent advanced second growth. Song similar to song of Plain Antvireo, but rises initially in pitch and intensity before accelerating and descending. **Ranges from southeastern Honduras to CR.**

Slaty Antwren *Myrmotherula schisticolor*

4 in (10 cm). Male and female resemble respective sexes of Dusky Antbird (p. 214), but are smaller and have shorter tail. Fairly common in Caribbean foothills and middle elevations; from 2,300 to 4,900 ft (700 to 1,500 m). Fairly common on Pacific slope of Guanacaste and Tilarán Cordilleras, from 3,300 to 4,900 ft (1,000 to 1,500 m); also fairly common on Pacific slope of Talamanca Cordillera, from 2,300 to 6,600 ft (700 to 2,000 m); uncommon in southern Pacific lowlands. Pairs forage actively with mixed flocks at lower levels of mature wet forest and adjacent advanced second growth. Whistles a high, soft *tswee-tswee-tswee-tswee*, each note upwardly inflected.

Rufous-rumped Antwren *Euchrepomis callinota*

4 in (10 cm). In size and color pattern, resembles a small flycatcher or warbler; **rufous rump** is diagnostic; also note **dark cap**. Rare at middle elevations of Caribbean slope, from Tilarán Cordillera south, from 2,300 to 3,900 ft (700 to 1,200 m). Forages actively (warbler-like) at middle levels of mature wet forest and forest edge, usually with mixed flocks.

Dot-winged Antwren *Microrhopias quixensis*

4 in (10 cm). The combination of a **single broad white wing bar, white dots on shoulder**, and **broad white tail tips** is diagnostic. Common in southern Pacific lowlands and foothills, uncommon in Caribbean lowlands and foothills to 3,300 ft (1,000 m). Pairs and small groups forage actively with mixed flocks in lower levels of mature wet forest and adjacent advanced second growth. Sings a series of high, fast notes, which rise initially in pitch and intensity before descending; also gives a sharp *speEa*.

Checker-throated Antwren *Epinecrophylla fulviventris*

4 in (10 cm). **Black-and-white throat pattern** on male is diagnostic; female has **pale iris** and **blackish wing coverts** (compare with female White-flanked Antwren). Uncommon in Caribbean lowlands and foothills; to 3,000 ft (900 m). Pairs and small groups forage actively with mixed flocks in lower levels of mature wet forest and adjacent advanced second growth, mostly investigating dried leaves. Utters a series of high, thin *tsit* notes, the first few notes somewhat more emphatic.

White-flanked Antwren *Myrmotherula axillaris*

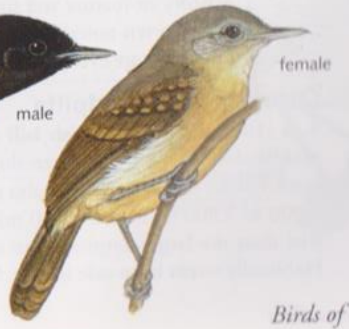
4 in (10 cm). The male's **white flanks** are diagnostic; female has **dark iris, gray cap**, and **white flanks** (compare with female Checker-throated Antwren). Uncommon in Caribbean lowlands and foothills; to 3,000 ft (900 m). Pairs are typically found in mixed flocks, foraging actively at lower and middle levels of mature wet forest and adjacent advanced second growth. Whistles a series of high *tswee* notes that drop in pitch and intensity.

Slaty Antwren

Rufous-rumped Antwren

Dot-winged Antwren

Checker-throated Antwren



White-flanked Antwren

Gnateaters

CONOPOPHAGIDAE. Though still antpittas by name, the two species of *Pittasoma* were moved to this family after proving to be more closely related to the genus *Conopophaga* than to other antbirds. Unlike true antpittas, members of the genera *Pittasoma* and *Conopophaga* show sexual dimorphism. This essentially South American family now reaches its northern limit in CR.

Black-crowned Antpitta *Pittasoma michleri*

7 in (18 cm). The rotund shape and **boldly scalloped underparts** set this species apart. Rare in Caribbean foothills, from Tilarán Cordillera south; from 1,000 to 2,600 ft (300 to 800 m). Stays on or near the ground in mature wet forest; accompanies army-ant swarms. Gives a long-winded series of sharp *pip* notes, rapid at first, then gradually slowing, the whole phrase lasting for thirty seconds or more. **Ranges from CR to northwestern Colombia.**

Antpittas

GRALLARIIDAE. These plump, short-tailed, long-legged birds tend to be shy and difficult to see in the dim rainforest understory. They typically exhibit upright postures and move by hopping.

Scaled Antpitta *Grallaria guatimalensis*

7 in (18 cm). This bird's plump shape, **scaled upperparts**, and **rufous underparts** are diagnostic. Rare at middle elevations, from 2,600 to 5,200 ft (800 to 1,600 m). Stays on or near the ground in mature wet montane forest, sometimes hopping along trails. Produces a low, hollow, crescendoing series of trills lasting about three seconds.

Thicket Antpitta *Hylopezus dives*

5 in (13 cm). Combination of fine black streaking on ochraceous breast and **reddish-orange vent** is definitive. Fairly common in Caribbean foothills and rare in Caribbean lowlands; to 3,000 ft (900 m). Difficult to see since it favors the cover of dense thickets at forest edges, in young second growth, and along streams. Presence revealed by a two-second series of about twelve whistled notes that rises slightly in pitch and volume, then ends abruptly (compare with Black-headed Antthrush [p. 224]). **Ranges from Honduras to western Colombia.**

Streak-chested Antpitta *Hylopezus perspicillatus*

5 in (13 cm). Has prominent **buffy eye ring**, buff-spotted wing bars, dark malar stripe, and **heavy black streaking on breast**. Fairly common in southern Pacific; uncommon on Caribbean slope; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Prefers relatively open areas in understory of mature wet forest; habitually inflates and deflates abdomen. Its song (of up to ten notes) lasts four seconds. The first three notes rise slightly; the following notes are even pitched and slower; the last few notes are coupled.

Ochre-breasted Antpitta *Grallaricula flavirostris*

4 in (10 cm). The **yellowish bill** distinguishes it from other antpittas. Rare at middle elevations on Caribbean slope, from 2,300 to 4,900 ft (700 to 1,500 m); from Tilarán Cordillera south; also rare at middle elevations on Pacific slope, from 3,000 to 5,900 ft (900 to 1,800 m), from Dota region south. Slightly less terrestrial than the larger antpittas, but still stays in understory of mature wet forest. Habitually twists from side to side. Sings a high trill with a rattling quality.

Antthrushes

FORMICARIIDAE. Antthrushes differ from antpittas (p. 222)—which formerly were placed in this family—in that they typically walk with their short tails cocked up, suggesting a miniature chicken or a forest rail. The three CR antthrushes can be told apart by the color and pattern of the head and by the color of the breast. All are heard more often than seen, and their respective vocalizations are quite distinct. Note that there is little range overlap.

Black-faced Antthrush *Formicarius analis*

7 in (18 cm). Note the **dark-gray breast**. Common in wet lowlands and foothills to 1,600 ft (500 m) on Caribbean slope (higher in the south) and to 4,900 ft (1,500 m) in southern Pacific. Struts through leaf litter of mature forest and advanced second growth. Whistles a labored *pyee, pyew, pyew*; the first note (accented and higher) is usually followed by two or three notes, but sometimes by as many as ten or more (compare with call of Chestnut-backed Antbird [p. 216]).

Black-headed Antthrush *Formicarius nigricapillus*

7 in (18 cm). The **entirely black head and breast** are diagnostic. Uncommon in Caribbean foothills and middle elevations; from 1,300 to 3,900 ft (400 to 1,200 m). Struts through leaf litter of mature forest and advanced second growth; accompanies army-ant swarms. Whistles a series of fast, hollow notes that rise in pitch, then level off, lasting about five seconds (longer than similar call of Thicket Antpitta [p. 222]).

Rufous-breasted Antthrush *Formicarius rufipectus*

7 in (18 cm). The **rufous breast** is diagnostic. Uncommon at middle elevations of Caribbean slope, from Tilarán Cordillera south; from 2,600 to 5,900 ft (800 to 1,800 m). Inhabits the floor of mature forest and advanced second growth, often beneath dense undergrowth. Whistles a clear, two-note *pyew, pyew*, the second note slightly higher.

Tapaculos

RHINOCRYPTIDAE. CR's tapaculo is the northernmost member of this essentially South American family. Tapaculos are mostly small dark birds, many with very limited distribution. Basically terrestrial and extremely furtive, they are heard far more often than seen.

Silvery-fronted Tapaculo *Scytalopus argentifrons*

4 in (10 cm). The **frosty stripe across the male's brow** is a good field mark; females are browner and lack brow line; both sexes have **barred flanks**. Common from timberline down to 4,900 ft (1,500 m) on Pacific slope, and down to 3,900 ft (1,200 m) on Caribbean slope, from Miravalles Volcano south. Inhabits its dense undergrowth in wet montane forest, especially along streams and ravines. At intervals, utters a characteristic series of rapid, emphatic, staccato notes that increase in volume, then decrease in pace, lasting five seconds or more. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

TYRANNIDAE. Both the largest New World bird family (about 400 species) and the most diverse CR family (82 species). Most species have a definite flycatcher jizz (upright posture, rather drab plumage). Bill size, shape, and color are important characteristics for sorting out species. Habits, habitat, and voice are also helpful in species identification. Some species have colorful crown patches that they display when excited; the illustrations show these, even though they are normally concealed.

Yellow-bellied Tyrannulet *Ornithion semiflavum*
3 in (8 cm). Small size, **obvious white superciliary**, yellow underparts, and absence of wing bars are diagnostic. Very similar to Brown-capped Tyrannulet, but note **gray crown** (ranges only overlap in Caño Negro region). Rare in lowlands from Caño Negro west to Guanacaste Cordillera, and from Carara NP south to Golfo Dulce; to 2,000 ft (600 m). Forages at forest edge and in gardens. Whistles five or six high, fairly even-pitched, slightly accelerating notes.

Brown-capped Tyrannulet *Ornithion brunneicapillus*
3 in (8 cm). Very similar to Yellow-bellied Tyrannulet, but has **brown crown**. Uncommon throughout Caribbean lowlands and foothills; to 3,000 ft (900 m). Forages actively with mixed flocks in mid- to upper canopy of forest and forest edge; more often heard than seen. Gives a high-pitched, emphatic series of whistled notes that, after an initial one or two notes, rapidly descend the scale.

Yellow Tyrannulet *Capsiempis flaveola*
4 in (10 cm). **Yellow underparts, wing bars, and superciliary** recall a Yellow-winged Vireo (p. 284) in pattern (but no range overlap). Common in Caribbean lowlands and southern Pacific intermontane valleys, uncommon in Caribbean foothills and southern Pacific lowlands; to 2,000 ft (600 m) on Caribbean slope, and to 3,900 ft (1,200 m) in southern Pacific. Pairs forage low in overgrown brushy areas. Quite vocal, utters sputtering series of *wheep* or *wee-deep* notes.

Stub-tailed Spadebill *Platyrinchus cancrominus*
4 in (10 cm). Virtually identical to White-throated Spadebill, though slightly paler; best told apart by habitat and voice in narrow zone of overlap. Uncommon in evergreen forest of northern Pacific lowlands and foothill forests on Pacific slope of northern cordilleras; to 4,300 ft (1,300 m). Keeps within three meters of forest floor. Call is a dry, rapid *kitidid* or *ti-di*.

Golden-crowned Spadebill *Platyrinchus coronatus*
3 in (8 cm). **Greenish back** and obvious **golden-rust crown** set it apart from the other two spadebills. Fairly common in understory of wet forest and advanced second growth; to 2,300 ft (700 m) on Caribbean slope, and to 3,900 ft (1,200 m) in southern Pacific. Produces a very high-pitched, rapid, hissing trill that undulates slightly and lasts about two seconds; could easily be mistaken for an insect noise.

White-throated Spadebill *Platyrinchus mystaceus*
4 in (10 cm). Virtually identical to Stub-tailed Spadebill, but darker (and little range overlap). Common in understory of middle-elevation wet forest; from 2,300 to 6,900 ft (700 to 2,100 m). Call is a sharp, squeaky *squik!*

Yellow-bellied Tyrannulet

Brown-capped Tyrannulet

Yellow Tyrannulet

Stub-tailed Spadebill

Golden-crowned Spadebill

White-throated Spadebill

note crown patch and broad, spade-like bill

Mouse-colored Tyrannulet *Phaeomyias murina*

5 in (13 cm). The **buffy wing bars** and **pinkish base of lower mandible**, together with **brownish upperparts**, should differentiate it from other tyrannulets. Rare in intermontane valleys of southern Pacific. Stays low in second growth and scrub. First reported in CR in 1996.

Rough-legged Tyrannulet *Phyllomyias burmeisteri*

4 in (10 cm). The **yellow wing bars** and **bicolored bill** set it apart from the Paltry Tyrannulet. The **white superciliaries meet on the forehead**—superciliaries do not meet on the forehead of the similar Yellow-crowned Tyrannulet (little or no range overlap). Rare in middle elevations and highlands; from 2,600 to 9,200 ft (800 to 2,800 m). Found in forest canopy and at forest edge. Call is a high, piercing *tseEe*; six of these notes in rapid succession constitute the song.

Paltry Tyrannulet *Zimmerius vilissimus*

4 in (10 cm). **Bright yellow wing edging** and **no wing bars** differentiate it from the Rough-legged and Yellow-crowned Tyrannulets—indeed from all other small, short-billed flycatchers, and even warblers. Common and widespread, from lowlands to timberline, though rare in Central Valley and northern Pacific. Frequents gardens, forest edge, and second growth, dining on mistletoe and other berries, as well as insects. Call is a whistled *peee-yer* that falls slightly at the end.

Yellow-crowned Tyrannulet *Tyrannulus elatus*

4 in (10 cm). Unlike other CR flycatchers that have concealed crown patches, this species frequently displays its crown patch, which is bright yellow. Otherwise distinguished from Paltry Tyrannulet by **yellowish wing bars** and **yellow belly**. Set apart from Southern Beardless-Tyrannulet by a more obvious superciliary and a dark-gray crown. Little or no range overlap with Rough-legged Tyrannulet. Uncommon in gardens and forest edge in southern Pacific; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Has been extending range from Panama and now known as far north as Carara NP area, where first reported in 2002. Whistles a clear *pray TEER*.

Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet *Camptostoma imberbe*

4 in (10 cm). Small and drab, with a **slight crest, dingy wing bars**, and **short bill**. Duller and with less distinct wing bars than Southern-Beardless Tyrannulet. Fairly common in dry forest habitat and scrub, up to 2,600 ft (800 m), including western Central Valley. Calls with a shrill *peeeuh*.

Southern Beardless-Tyrannulet *Camptostoma obsoletum*

4 in (10 cm). Very similar to Northern-Beardless Tyrannulet (note rather small area of range overlap), but brighter and with more **conspicuous wing bars**. Set apart from Yellow-crowned Tyrannulet by a less obvious superciliary and by brownish-gray crown. Fairly common in southern Pacific lowlands, uncommon in southern Pacific foothills; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m); rare north of Carara NP, where mostly confined to gallery forest. Prefers second growth and gardens; often holds tail cocked up. Sings four to six slightly descending *psee* notes; call is a high *wheer*.

Mouse-colored Tyrannulet

Rough-legged Tyrannulet

Palty Tyrannulet

Yellow-crowned Tyrannulet

Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet

Southern Beardless-Tyrannulet

Yellow-bellied Elaenia *Elaenia flavogaster*

6 in (15 cm). The **parted crest**, revealing a white crown patch, is distinctive. When crest is not raised, this species looks nearly identical to a Lesser Elaenia that *has its crest raised*; so, in zones of overlap, note absence of pale wing patch. Widespread and fairly common in most of CR, though rare in northern Pacific to 7,200 ft (2,200 m). Found in semi-open habitats and gardens, where it forages at middle levels, frequently eating berries. Often appears agitated due to the raised crest and somewhat irritated quality of the freely given call, which is a loud, wheezy *wheeeur*.

Lesser Elaenia *Elaenia chiriquensis*

5 in (13 cm). Very similar to Yellow-bellied Elaenia, but note **pale wing patch** formed by edges of folded secondaries. At most, only raises a slight crest (never parted down the middle); white crown patch best seen from behind. Fairly common in intermontane valleys of southern Pacific, uncommon in Cartago/Paraíso area; status uncertain on lower western slope of Miravalles Volcano. Prefers gardens and scrubby open areas with small trees. Calls with scratchy notes.

Mountain Elaenia *Elaenia frantzii*

6 in (15 cm). Olive-green above with **obvious wing bars** (appear spotted) and wing edging; has a **round head**. Common in highlands, from about 3,900 ft (1,200 m) to timberline. Found at forest edge and in gardens; eats mostly berries. Gives a loud whistled *pseer*.

Northern Scrub-Flycatcher *Sublegatus arenarum*

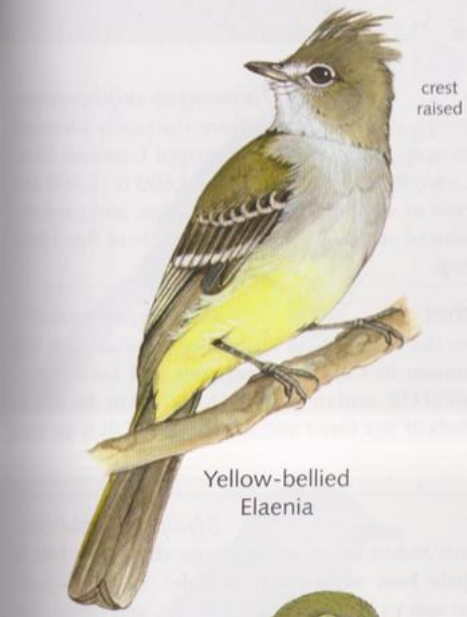
6 in (15 cm). Distinguished from the three CR members of the genus *Elaenia* (see above) by **more distinct contrast on underparts**. Distinguished from the Panama Flycatcher (p. 246) by **small bill** and **faint supraloral stripe**. Uncommon in mangroves and adjacent scrub around the Gulf of Nicoya; rare in similar habitat around Golfo Dulce. Whistles a clear *weep*.

Rufous-browed Tyrannulet *Phylloscartes superciliaris*

4 in (10 cm). The rufous brow and other distinct facial markings facilitate identification of this otherwise rather nondescript bird. Note, however, that the rufous brow is not always obvious. Rare in wet forest on the northern half of the Caribbean slope; from 1,600 to 4,300 ft (500 to 1,300 m). Accompanies mixed flocks, foraging like a warbler in midcanopy vegetation and at forest edge. Call is a sharp, emphatic *screesh*.

Piratic Flycatcher *Legatus leucophaius*

6 in (15 cm). Recalls the much larger Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher (p. 250), but has a **short black bill, unstreaked olive-brown back**, and **dusky tail** (not rufous). Common breeding migrant from lowlands to about 4,900 ft (1,500 m); migrates to South America after breeding (most gone by late Sept), begins returning in late Jan. Favors gardens and forest edge, typically perches in treetops. Named for its habit of expropriating other birds' nests by pestering the builders until they abandon the structure. Often-heard call is a high, ringing *bee-ee* that rises and falls, followed by a pause and then a series of three to six fast notes: *bidididi*.



Yellow-olive Flycatcher *Tolmomyias sulphurescens*

5 in (13 cm). The **pale iris** distinguishes this species from the nearly identical Yellow-margined Flycatcher. Set apart from similarly plumaged Greenish Elaenia by **wide bill** and pale iris. Common and widespread; to 4,600 ft (1,400 m). Forages at lower and middle levels of second growth, forest edge, and gardens. The conspicuous nest, in the form of an upside-down U, is made of fine black fibers. Call is a shrill, sibilant *tssssp*.

Yellow-margined Flycatcher *Tolmomyias assimilis*

5 in (13 cm). Nearly identical to the Yellow-olive Flycatcher, but has **dark iris** and **darker gray head**. Uncommon in Caribbean lowlands and foothills; to 2,000 ft (600 m) in northern half of CR, and to 3,300 ft (1,000 m) in the south. Forages at middle and upper levels of wet forest and forest edge. Call is an emphatic *tssk, tssp, tssp, tssp*.

Greenish Elaenia *Myiopagis viridicata*

5 in (13 cm). Nondescript, with indistinct facial markings; the **black bill** is **narrow and rounded** (note **pale base of lower mandible**). Could suggest Yellow-olive Flycatcher, but that species has gray head, pale iris, and broad, flat bill. Uncommon on Pacific slope and in Caño Negro region, rare in Reventazón River watershed; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Found singly at forest edge and in second growth. Call is a somewhat buzzy *cheez*.

Olive-striped Flycatcher *Mionectes olivaceus*

5 in (13 cm). The **whitish triangular spot behind the eye** combined with narrow streaking on the breast identifies this slender-billed flycatcher. Fairly common from middle elevations to highlands, from about 2,600 to 7,200 ft (800 to 2,200 m); some descend to base of mountains on Caribbean slope from July to Jan. Forages for insects and fruits at lower and middle levels of wet forest and at forest edge. Males produce a soft, shrill, undulating sound.

Sepia-capped Flycatcher *Leptopogon amaurocephalus*

5 in (13 cm). The **dark-brown crown** and **ochre wing bars** distinguish it from the Slaty-capped Flycatcher. Rare on Caribbean slope of Guanacaste, Tilarán, and Central Cordilleras, and in intermontane valleys of southern Pacific; to 4,300 ft (1,300 m). Keeps to lower levels of mature wet forest and advanced second growth. Call is a single, loud, harsh note.

Slaty-capped Flycatcher *Leptopogon superciliaris*

5 in (13 cm). Similar to Sepia-capped Flycatcher, but has **gray crown** and **conspicuous dark ear patch**. Fairly common on Caribbean slope, from Tilarán Cordillera south; also common on Pacific slope of Talamanca Cordillera; from 1,600 to 5,200 ft (500 to 1,600 m). Forages at middle levels of wet forest; typically accompanies mixed flocks. Call is a high, sharp *tswit*.

Common Tody-Flycatcher *Todirostrum cinereum*

4 in (10 cm). This pert little bird is distinguished from the Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher by its **entirely yellow underparts** and **yellow iris**; also note two-tone coloration. Common and widespread, though less common in northern Pacific; to 5,200 ft (1,600 m). Forages actively in lower levels of vegetation in gardens, second growth, and along streams. Calls with high, staccato *chip* notes that often run together very rapidly.

Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher *Todirostrum nigriceps*

3 in (8 cm). Similar to the Common Tody-Flycatcher, but has **white throat** and **dark iris**; also note that the **yellow-green back contrasts with the black cap**. Uncommon in Caribbean lowlands and foothills; to 3,300 ft (1,000 m). Difficult to see since it stays high in trees of advanced second growth, forest edge, and gardens. Gives a series of high *chip* notes that trails off toward the end.

Black-capped Pygmy-Tyrant *Myiornis atricapillus*

3 in (8 cm). The **white spectacles** distinguish it from other diminutive but large-billed flycatchers. Fairly common in Caribbean lowlands and foothills; to 2,000 ft (600 m). Inhabits wet forest, advanced second growth, and forest edge, though its small size makes it difficult to spot. The buzzy call is easily mistaken for an insect or amphibian.

Slate-headed Tody-Flycatcher *Poecilotriccus sylvia*

4 in (10 cm). Told apart from other small flycatchers with gray heads and olive backs by the **long, straight, thick, black bill**. Found from sea level to 3,300 ft (1,000 m) on both slopes, though relatively common only in wet southern Pacific. Stays low in dense vegetation in second growth and more open areas of forest. Call is a short *trrr*, very similar to call of Northern Bentbill.

Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant *Lophotriccus pileatus*

3 in (8 cm). The very rarely raised **rufous-tipped black crest feathers** are a noticeable and unique feature, even when not raised. Common on Caribbean slope, from 1,000 to 5,600 ft (300 to 1,700 m); common on Pacific slope, from 2,500 to 5,600 ft (750 to 1,700 m). Also found in hills of Osa Peninsula. Prefers middle levels of wet forest and tall second growth. Produces an assertive series of dry, wooden *chik* notes.

Northern Bentbill *Oncostoma cinereigulare*

4 in (10 cm). The **curved bill tip** is diagnostic. Common in southern Pacific lowlands and foothills, uncommon in northern Pacific and Caribbean lowlands; also uncommon in foothills; occasionally found as high as 3,600 ft (1,100 m). Typically forages from one to six meters above the ground in second growth and more open areas of forest, but its small size, drab color, staid manner, and darting flight make it difficult to see. The often-heard, soft, rolling *perrrrrr* alerts one to its presence; call is slightly longer than the very similar call of the Slate-headed Tody-Flycatcher.

Ruddy-tailed Flycatcher *Terenotriccus erythrurus*
3 in (8 cm). The combination of small size, **gray head**, and **rufous wings, tail, and underparts** is distinctive. Uncommon in wet lowland and foothill forests to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Perches in lower and middle levels of forest; has habit of periodically raising wings above back, then lowering them, in one quick motion. Call is a high *speeee spit*.

Ochre-bellied Flycatcher *Mionectes oleagineus*
5 in (13 cm). A slim, plain-olive bird with a noticeably **ochre-colored belly**. Common in wet lowlands of both slopes, uncommon in foothills and in Central Valley, and rare in gallery forests of northern Pacific lowlands; to 4,600 ft (1,400 m). Stays low inside mature forest and second growth; also comes to forest edge and gardens. Often flicks one wing up over the back, then the other. Males sing incessantly from low perches, producing a series of sharp *chip* notes followed by a number of louder, more emphatic notes.

Tawny-chested Flycatcher *Aphanotriccus capitalis*
5 in (13 cm). The **tawny chest** resembles that of Sulphur-rumped Flycatcher, but note **wing bars** and entirely olive-green back and rump. Uncommon on northern half of Caribbean slope; to 3,300 ft (1,000 m). Inhabits lower and middle levels of tall second growth, overgrown forest edges, and streamside thickets. Whistles a quick, upslurred *speeya*. **Endemic to eastern Nicaragua and CR.**

Bran-colored Flycatcher *Myiophobus fasciatus*
5 in (13 cm). The brownish upperparts and streaked breast might suggest a female Blue-black Grassquit (p. 326) or a female Indigo Bunting (p. 344), both of which share the same habitat; but note **flat bill, whitish wing bars**, and **white patch on secondaries**. Fairly common in intermontane valleys of southern Pacific, from 2,300 to 3,900 ft (700 to 1,200 m); also reported near Golfito. Stays low in second growth and scrub. Repeats a whistled *whee, whee, whee...*

Sulphur-rumped Flycatcher *Myiobius sulphureipygius*
5 in (13 cm). Nearly identical to the Black-tailed Flycatcher, but has darker **tawny chest and flanks**; also note hint of a dusky bar below eye; the two species are usually found in different habitats. Light-yellow rump could suggest a Buff-rumped Warbler (p. 290), but note lack of superciliary. Fairly common in lowland and foothill wet forests; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Forages at lower and middle levels, often with mixed flocks. Call is an explosive *swit!*

Black-tailed Flycatcher *Myiobius atricaudus*
5 in (13 cm). Distinguished from nearly identical Sulphur-rumped Flycatcher by paler breast; usually found in different habitat. Light-yellow rump could suggest a Buff-rumped Warbler (p. 290), but note lack of superciliary. Uncommon in southern Pacific lowlands and foothills, to 3,900 ft (1,200 m); rare north of Carara NP. Prefers forest edge, second growth, and edges of mangrove swamps. Call is a colorless *whit*.

Bright-rumped Attila *Attila spadiceus*

8 in (20 cm). The combination of **long, hook-tipped bill, red iris**, and **bright-yellow rump** is diagnostic. Common and widespread; to 5,900 ft (1,800 m). Found in mature forest, second growth, forest edge, and gardens. Very vocal (though difficult to see when calling); gives an increasingly emphatic *wit, wi-deet, wi-deet, wi-deet, wheeew*, the last note descending; also makes a fast *we-hir, we-hir, we-hir, we-hir, we-hir, we-hir* that rises and falls.

Rufous Mourner *Rhytipterna holerythra*

8 in (20 cm). Virtually identical to the slightly larger Rufous Piha (p. 260)—best told apart by voice. Fairly common in wet lowlands and foothills; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Mostly inside mature forest and tall second growth, at middle to upper levels; often accompanies mixed flocks. Whistles a loud, slow, somewhat sad *wheea-tseer* that rises and falls.

Torrent Tyrannulet *Serpophaga cinerea*

4 in (10 cm). The only CR bird found along mountain streams that has **blackish cap, wings, and tail**. (The American Dipper [p. 270], which shares the same habitat, is plumper and more uniformly grayish.) A common inhabitant along swift, rocky, highland streams, from about 1,600 to 7,200 ft (500 to 2,200 m); occasionally below this range on Caribbean slope; from Tilarán Cordillera south. Forages from river rocks and along banks, often pumps tail. Call is a shrill *tseep*.

Long-tailed Tyrant *Colonia colonus*

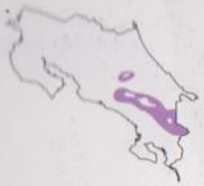
10 in (25 cm). The **two elongated central tail feathers** continue up to 4 in (10 cm) beyond rest of tail in males; slightly less in females. If the tail feathers cannot be seen, the broad **whitish superciliary and back stripe** are diagnostic. Fairly common in Caribbean lowlands; to 2,000 ft (600 m). Forages from exposed perches in forest clearings and gardens, and along rivers; often in pairs. Call is a sweet, rising *sweeE*.

Royal Flycatcher *Onychorhynchus coronatus*

7 in (18 cm). Rarely opens its spectacular crest, but the closed crown feathers still facilitate the identification by giving the bird a **peculiar hammerheaded appearance**. Also note the **cinnamon rump** and **tawny tail** that contrast with the brown upperparts. Uncommon in Pacific lowlands, rare in Caribbean lowlands; to 3,000 ft (900 m). Found at lower levels of humid forest, forest edge, and particularly along wooded streams, where it constructs a pendant nest nearly two meters long. Call is a resonant, whistled *keyerink*.

Eye-ringed Flatbill *Rhynchocyclus brevirostris*

6 in (15 cm). As its name suggests, this species has a **prominent eye ring** and a **wide, flat bill**, but is otherwise devoid of field marks. Uncommon in wet forest, from sea level to 6,600 ft (2,000 m). Seems lethargic; perches upright in mid-canopy, often with mixed flocks. Call is a sharp, harsh *sweezp*.



Ochraceous Pewee *Contopus ochraceus*

7 in (18 cm). Larger than the very similar Tufted Flycatcher (p. 244) and with a proportionately longer bill. Rare in Talamanca Cordillera and on Irazú and Turrialba Volcanoes; from 7,200 to 9,800 ft (2,200 to 3,000 m). Sallies from exposed perches in treefall gaps and other openings in oak forest; shakes tail upon landing. Call is a shrill *pit, pit, pit*. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Dark Pewee *Contopus lugubris*

7 in (18 cm). The **obvious crest** and absence of wing bars distinguish this species from the wood-pewees and the Tropical Pewee. Fairly common at middle and upper elevations, from 3,900 to 7,200 ft (1,200 to 2,200 m). Sallies from high exposed perch at forest edges or in gardens, often near streams. Repeats a staccato *pik*. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Olive-sided Flycatcher *Contopus cooperi*

7 in (18 cm). White median underparts separate **dusky sides and flanks**, forming unique vest. Looks shorter tailed than other *Contopus* species. Uncommon passage migrant from late Aug to late Oct and from mid-March to late May; rare winter resident; occurs virtually anywhere below timberline. Makes long sallies after flying insects, typically returning to the same high, exposed perch. Sometimes utters a sharp *pip, pip, pip*.

[Bill color and vocalizations are key to identifying these three species, which can be told apart from the *Empidonax* species (p. 242) by their less-distinct eye rings and wing bars. Also compare with the Dark Pewee.]

Western Wood-Pewee *Contopus sordidulus*

6 in (15 cm). Usually, **only the base of the lower mandible is orange**. A common and widespread passage migrant from late July to mid-Nov and from late March to early June, though most numerous from foothills to highlands; rare winter resident (and possibly breeding migrant) in highlands. Found in virtually any habitat where there is an exposed perch. Birds habitually return to the same perch after a sally. Call is a downslurred *peeur*.

Eastern Wood-Pewee *Contopus virens*

6 in (15 cm). **Lower mandible is orange with dark tip**. A common and widespread passage migrant from mid-Aug to late Nov and from mid-March to mid-May; generally to 4,900 ft (1,500 m), and occasionally to 8,200 ft (2,500 m). Rare winter resident; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Occurs in virtually any habitat where there is an exposed perch. Birds habitually return to the same perch after a sally. Call is a rising *pee-wee*; sometimes whistles its full *pee-a-weee*.

Tropical Pewee *Contopus cinereus*

5 in (13 cm). Lower mandible is orange with dark tip. Combination of **bill color, pale lores**, and **yellowish belly** is diagnostic. Also note that **crown is darker than rest of head**. Common in Caribbean lowlands and foothills; to 3,300 ft (1,000 m). Uncommon in Central Valley and in southern Pacific, up to 4,300 ft (1,300 m); also uncommon in mangroves around Gulf of Nicoya. Frequents gardens, pastures with brush, and forest edge; tends to perch quite low and does not regularly return to the same perch after a sally. Call is a rapid, bubbly trill.

[The *Empidonax* flycatchers on this page are among the most difficult birds in CR to identify to species level. Variable plumage and infrequently given single-note calls only exacerbate the situation. They are also very similar to the wood-pewee and Tropical Pewee (p. 240), but have more distinct eye ring and wing bars.]

Alder Flycatcher *Empidonax alnorum*
Willow Flycatcher *Empidonax traillii*

6 in (15 cm). Formerly considered conspecific, the two are so alike in aspect and behavior that it is best to regard them as *Empidonax* sp. (or Traill's Flycatcher—the former common name) when seen in the field. Both have an indistinct eye ring, brownish-olive upperparts, white throat, light brownish wash on breast, and pale-yellow lower underparts. Abundant passage migrants from early Sept to early Nov and from mid-Mar to late May; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). The Willow Flycatcher is a rare winter resident from Dec to Feb, during which time the Alder Flycatcher is absent. Both prefer low perches in fairly open settings. Calls are very hard to distinguish; songs are occasionally heard during spring migration. The Alder Flycatcher sings a burry *weebyew* and the Willow Flycatcher sings a scratchy *fitz-bew*.

Acadian Flycatcher *Empidonax virescens*

6 in (15 cm). Note **longer primary projection** than any other *Empidonax* in CR. Has narrow eye ring, olive upperparts, whitish throat, olive wash on breast, whitish middle of breast, and pale yellow on rest of underparts. Fairly common passage migrant, from mid-Sept to early Nov and from early March to mid-May; uncommon winter resident, from mid-Sept to mid-May; mostly in Caribbean lowlands but possible elsewhere, up to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Most likely in understory of forest and at forest edge, in dense vegetation. Its note is a loud, squeaky *pseeip*.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher *Empidonax flaviventris*

5 in (13 cm). The most readily identifiable of the migrant empids, it is the only one with a **dull-yellowish throat**. Told apart from the resident Yellowish Flycatcher (p. 244) by its evenly circular eye ring and overall olive coloration. Common from lowlands to middle elevations; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m), from late Aug to late May. Inhabits lower levels of forest and second growth. Frequently whistles a clear, rising *tsu-wee*, reminiscent of a wood-pewee (p. 240).

White-throated Flycatcher *Empidonax albigularis*

5 in (13 cm). This resident empid is browner than the migrant empids; note **obvious white throat contrasting with brownish chest**. Fairly common around the western and southern base of Irazú Volcano; uncommon along northeastern flank of Guanacaste, Tilarán, and Central Cordilleras; rare in southern Pacific intermontane valleys; mostly from 1,600 to 4,900 ft (500 to 1,500 m). Forages from low, exposed perches in brushy pastures and marshy areas. Makes a buzzy, rising *pisseep*.

Least Flycatcher *Empidonax minimus*

5 in (13 cm). Smaller and grayer than other migrant empids. It has an **obvious eye ring** and a fairly **short bill**; also has the shortest primary projection of any of the migrant empids. A rare migrant, from Oct to April; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Stays at lower levels of second growth and forest edge. Call is a sharp *pit*.

Alder/Willow Flycatcher

Acadian Flycatcher

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher

White-throated Flycatcher

Least Flycatcher

Yellowish Flycatcher *Empidonax flavescens*

5 in (13 cm). Somewhat resembles Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (p. 242), but brighter yellow below; also note that **uneven eye ring extends behind the eye**. Common in middle elevations and highlands; from 2,600 to 8,200 ft (800 to 2,500 m). Inhabits lower and middle levels of mature wet forest and adjacent second growth and gardens. Call is a single, high *tseew*.

Black-capped Flycatcher *Empidonax atriceps*

4 in (10 cm). The **black crown** and **strongly elliptical eye ring** distinguish this small native empid. Common in highlands, from about 7,200 ft (2,200 m) to above timberline. Forages at all levels of forest edge, brushy pastures, and gardens; often quite low and confiding. Call is a single *pwip*. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Tufted Flycatcher *Mitrephanes phaeocercus*

5 in (13 cm). The smart **crest** and **bright-ochre breast** are key characteristics. Smaller than the rare Ochraceous Pewee (p. 240), which is similar in behavior and habitat, but has a proportionately longer bill. Common in middle elevations and highlands; from 1,600 to 9,800 ft (500 to 3,000 m). Perches on exposed twigs in treefall gaps and other openings in mature forest, also at forest edge and gardens; often in pairs. Typically shivers its wings and tail upon alighting after a sally, and often gives a quick, spirited series of *pip* notes.

Fork-tailed Flycatcher *Tyrannus savana*

14 in (36 cm). Two-tone coloration and **extremely long tail** are diagnostic. Fairly common in southern Pacific intermontane valleys; from 300 to 3,900 ft (100 to 1,200 m). Rare in Cartago area and casual elsewhere (e.g., northern Pacific and Caribbean lowlands). Found in open areas, where it often perches very low in trees or on bushes, if not on the ground. Produces a dry, scratchy, creaking sound.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher *Tyrannus forficatus*

13 in (33 cm). The **pearl-gray upperparts, salmon flanks and wing linings** and **extremely long tail** are diagnostic. A common winter resident in northern Pacific lowlands and foothills, uncommon in Central Valley (where occasionally found above 6,600 ft [2,000 m]), rare in southern Pacific lowlands, and casual in northern central Caribbean lowlands; from Oct to April. Prefers open areas with scattered trees, but also perches on fences and wires. Gives a flat *pik*.

Black Phoebe *Sayornis nigricans*

7 in (18 cm). Unlike any other CR flycatcher in coloration; dark bill, eye, and legs differentiate it from similarly patterned thrushes. Common in Central Valley and at middle elevations, uncommon on Pacific slope of Guanacaste and Tilarán Cordilleras; from 1,600 to 7,200 ft (500 to 2,200 m). Almost always near water; often perches on river rocks, but also on wires, buildings, and the ground. Gives a quick, shrill *chirp*.

Great Crested Flycatcher *Myiarchus crinitus*

8 in (20 cm). The gray and yellow underparts are brighter, and their junction more sharply defined, than in other *Myiarchus* flycatchers; also note **pale base of lower mandible**. Winter residents are common on Pacific slope and fairly common on Caribbean slope; to 4,600 ft (1,400 m); from late Sept to early May. Passage migrants are common on both slopes; to 5,900 ft (1,800 m). Possible in almost any wooded habitat, even in mangroves and gardens. Call is a rising *wheep*.

Brown-crested Flycatcher *Myiarchus tyrannulus*

8 in (20 cm). Browner above and paler below than Great Crested Flycatcher, with **all-black bill**. Difficult to tell apart from Nutting's Flycatcher; if possible, note gray-brown rump. Common in northern Pacific and uncommon in western end of Central Valley; to 3,000 ft (900 m). Favors open habitats—such as brushy pastures—and forest and mangrove edges. Call is a repetitious, sharp *whip*.

Dusky-capped Flycatcher *Myiarchus tuberculifer*

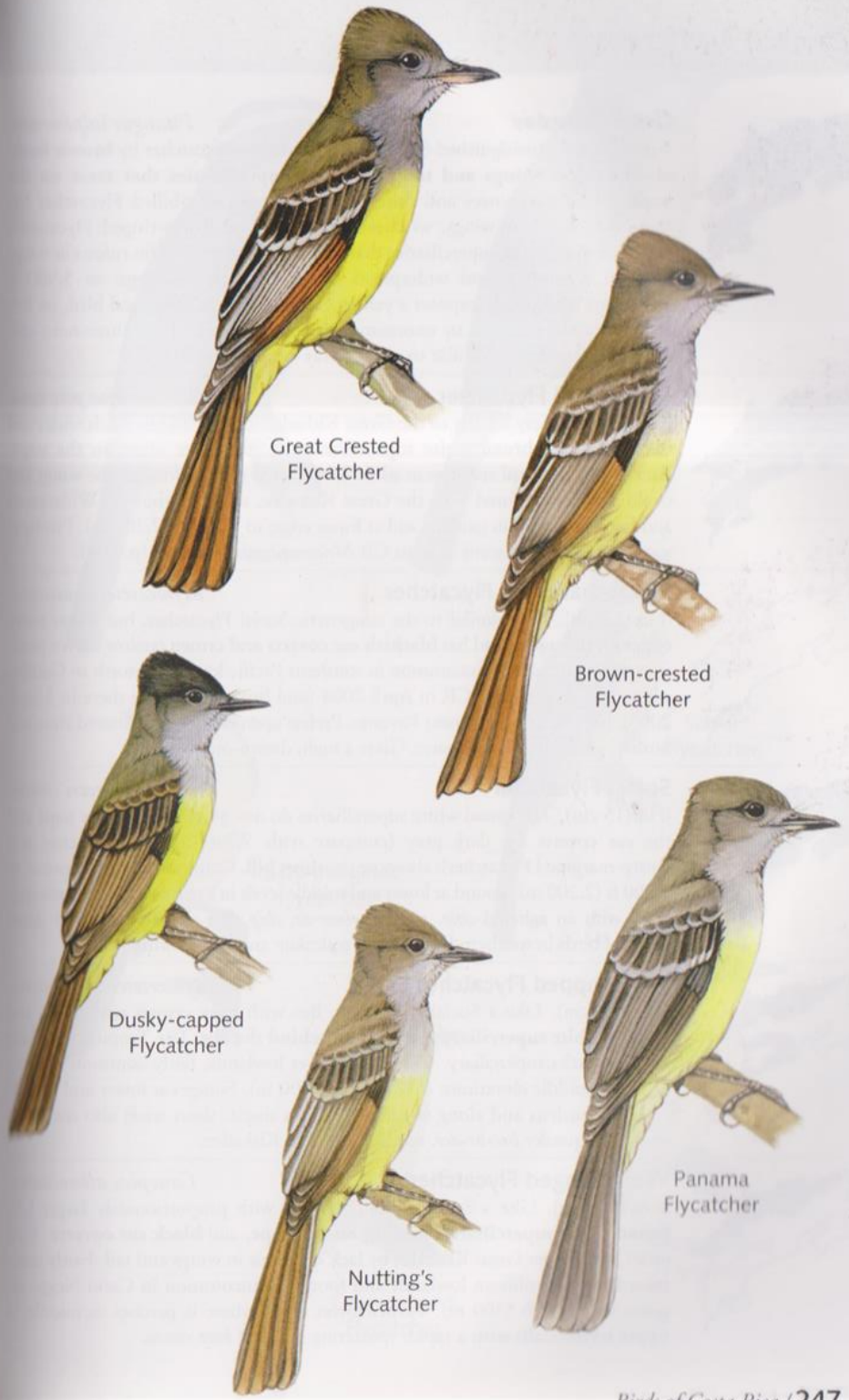
6 in (15 cm). The decidedly **darker crown** distinguishes it from other members of its genus. Common and widespread; to 5,900 ft (1,800 m). Forages at lower and middle levels in gardens and at forest edge. Whistles a somewhat mournful *wheeèw* that rises and falls slightly; fairly similar to call of both Nutting's and Panama Flycatchers.

Nutting's Flycatcher *Myiarchus nuttingi*

7 in (18 cm). Very similar to Brown-crested Flycatcher and not easily distinguished in the field, though it is slightly smaller and slimmer; if possible, note cinnamon rump. Uncommon in northern Pacific and western end of Central Valley; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Favors lower and middle levels of deciduous and humid forest; also found at forest edge. Whistles a *peeer* reminiscent of Dusky-capped Flycatcher, but higher pitched and less melancholy.

Panama Flycatcher *Myiarchus panamensis*

8 in (20 cm). Told apart from other *Myiarchus* flycatchers by having **no rufous in wings and tail**. Distinguished from Northern Scrub-Flycatcher (p. 230) by large bill and absence of facial markings. Fairly common in Pacific mangroves from Gulf of Nicoya south. Whistles a clear *wheeer* similar to that of Dusky-capped Flycatcher, sometimes followed by a long, fast, rolling trill.



Great Kiskadee *Pitangus sulphuratus*

9 in (23 cm). Distinguished from adult Boat-billed Flycatcher by **brown back, mostly rufous wings and tail**, and **white superciliaries that meet on the nape**; also has narrower and thinner bill (juvenile Boat-billed Flycatcher has some rufous in the wings, so check the bill). The White-ringed Flycatcher, which also has white superciliaries that meet on the nape, has no rufous in wings and tail. Common and widespread in gardens and clearings; to 5,900 ft (1,800 m). Frequently exposes a yellow crown patch. A very vocal bird, its English common name is an onomatopoeic version of the loud three-note call *kis-ka-dee* (somewhat similar to call of Gray-capped Flycatcher).

Boat-billed Flycatcher *Megarynchus pitangua*

9 in (23 cm). Very similar to the Great Kiskadee, but the bill is much wider and thicker and the **broad white superciliaries do not quite meet on the nape**. Back, wings, and tail are olive in adult; juvenile has some rufous on the wings and could thus be confused with the Great Kiskadee, so check the bill. Widespread and fairly common in gardens and at forest edge; to 7,200 ft (2,200 m). Produces a rattling call reminiscent of most CR *Melanerpes* woodpeckers (p. 194).

Rusty-margined Flycatcher *Myiozetetes cayanensis*

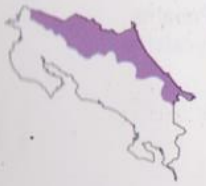
6 in (15 cm). Very similar to the congeneric Social Flycatcher, but shows **rusty edges on primaries** and has **blackish ear coverts and crown** (yellow crown patch is usually concealed). Uncommon in southern Pacific lowlands, north to Gamba, where first reported for CR in April 2004 (and first seen nesting there in March 2006); has also been seen near Pavones. Prefers open areas with scattered trees and bushes; often found near water. Gives a high, drawn-out *dzeeeeeh*.

Social Flycatcher *Myiozetetes similis*

6 in (15 cm). The broad white superciliaries do not quite meet on the nape and the ear coverts are dark gray (compare with White-ringed Flycatcher and Rusty-margined Flycatcher); also note the **short bill**. Common and widespread; to 7,200 ft (2,200 m). Found at lower and middle levels in gardens and along streams. Calls with an agitated *chip, cheer-de-cheer-de, chip* that alternates up and down (song of birds in southern Pacific has a squeakier and less colorful quality).

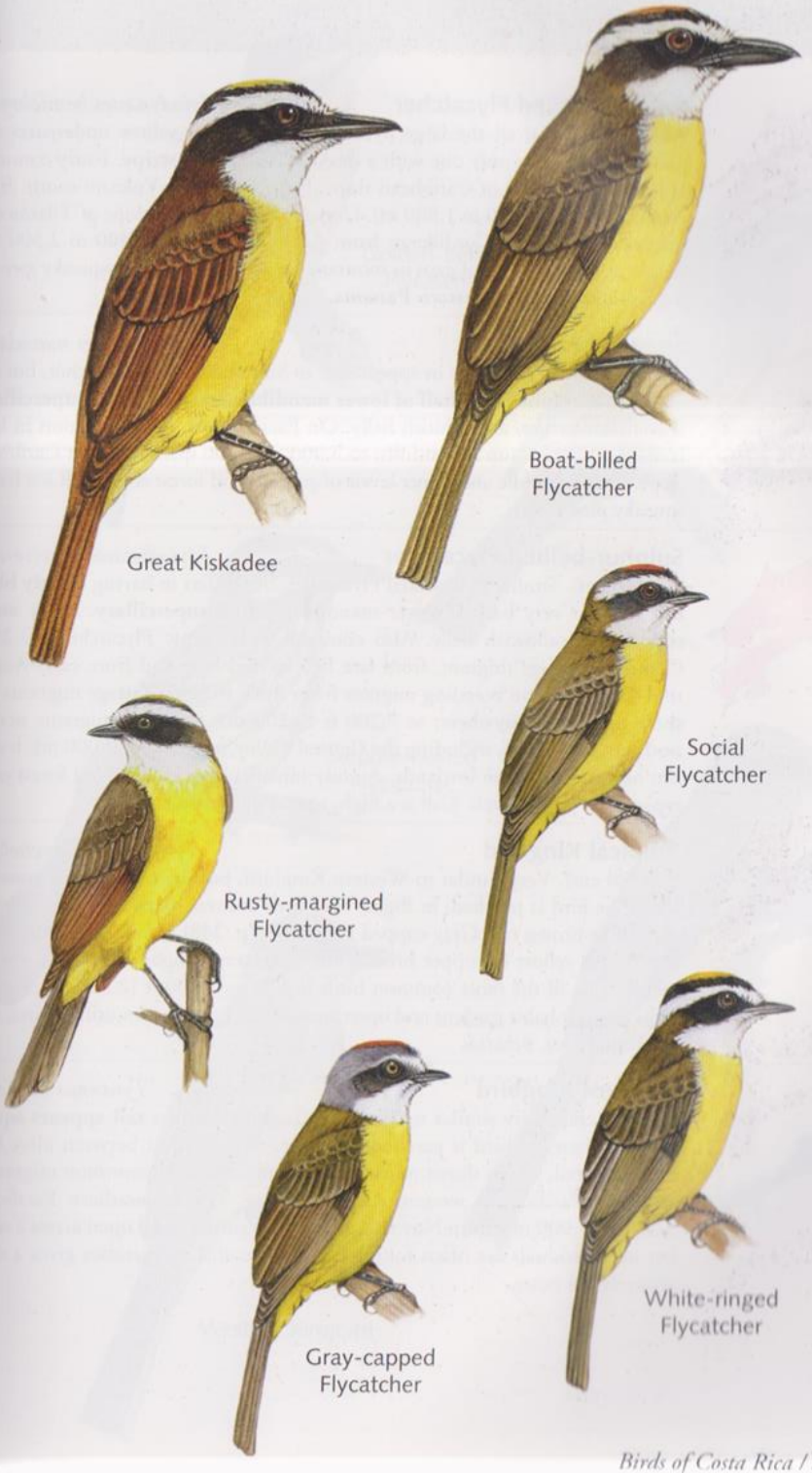
Gray-capped Flycatcher *Myiozetetes granadensis*

6 in (15 cm). Like a Social Flycatcher, but with **gray crown and nape**, and **narrow white superciliary ending just behind the eye**. The Tropical Kingbird (p. 250) lacks superciliary. Common in wet lowlands, fairly common in foothills and middle elevations; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Forages at lower and middle levels in gardens and along streams. Call is a single, short *wick*; also makes an agitated, squeaky *bee-be-dee*, recalling a Great Kiskadee.



White-ringed Flycatcher *Conopias albovittatus*

6 in (15 cm). Like a Social Flycatcher, but with proportionately larger bill, **broad white superciliaries joining on the nape**, and **black ear coverts**. Told apart from larger Great Kiskadee by lack of rufous in wings and tail. Fairly common in wet Caribbean lowlands and foothills, uncommon in Caño Negro region; to 1,600 ft (500 m). Favors forest edge, where it perches at middle to upper levels. Calls with a rapid, sputtering series of *beep* notes.



Golden-bellied Flycatcher *Myiodynastes hemichrysus*

8 in (20 cm). Of all the large flycatchers with bright-yellow underparts (see previous page), the only one with a **dark lateral throat stripe**. Fairly common at middle elevations of Caribbean slope, from Miravalles Volcano south; from 2,600 to 5,900 ft (800 to 1,800 m). Uncommon on Pacific slope of Tilarán and northern Talamanca Cordilleras; from 4,600 to 7,500 ft (1,400 to 2,300 m). Found at middle levels of gaps in montane forest. Call is a high, squeaky *spee-ah*. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Streaked Flycatcher *Myiodynastes maculatus*

8 in (20 cm). Very similar in appearance to Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, but differs in having **pink basal half of lower mandible, cream-colored superciliary, thin malar stripe**, and whitish belly. On Pacific slope, fairly common in lowlands and uncommon in foothills; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Casual on Caribbean slope. Prefers middle and upper levels of gardens and forest edge. Call is a harsh, squeaky *pick-pyew*.

Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher *Myiodynastes luteiventris*

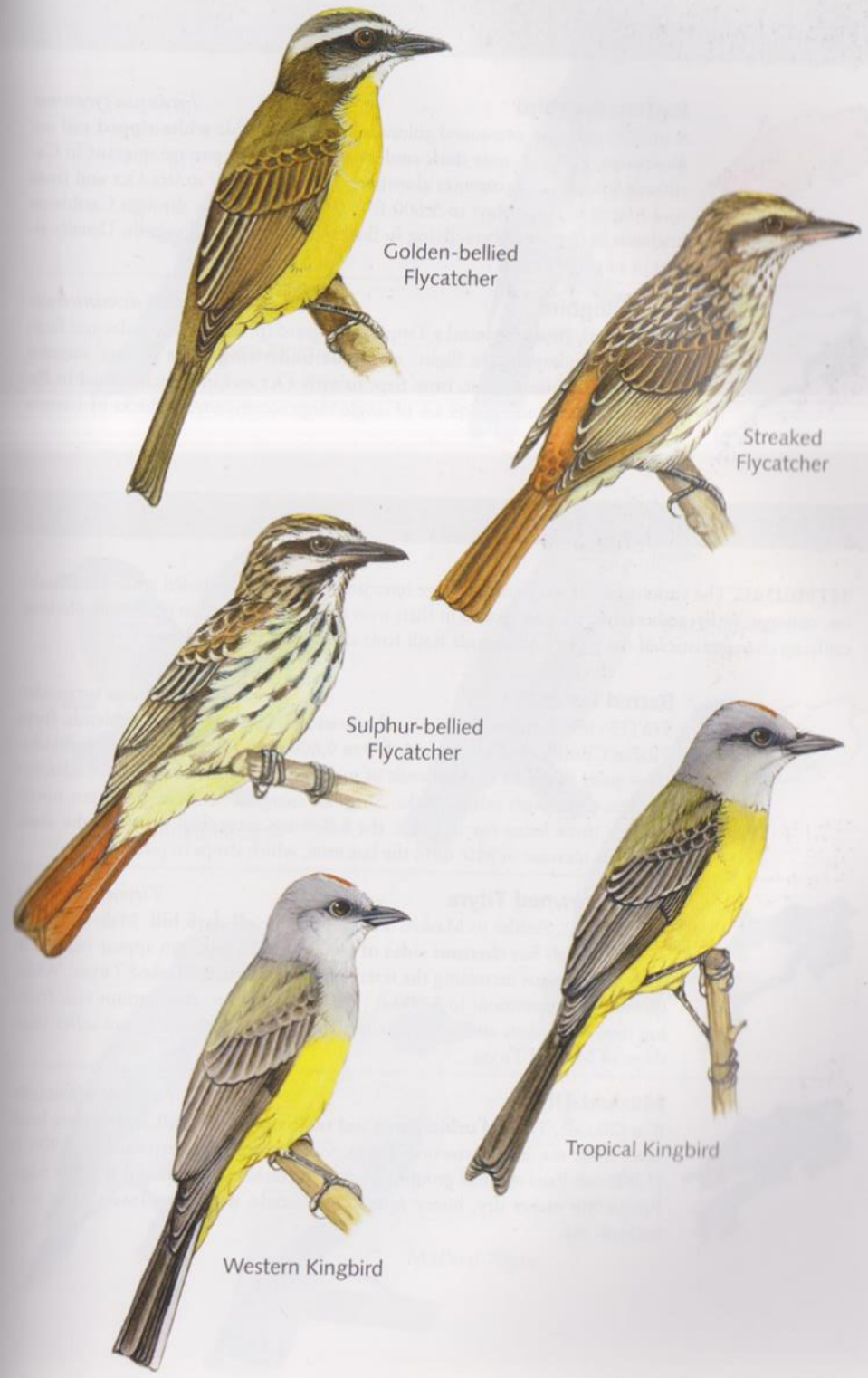
8 in (20 cm). Similar to Streaked Flycatcher, but differs in having **mostly black bill** (pale at very base of lower mandible), **white superciliary, thick malar stripe**, and yellowish belly. Also compare with Piratic Flycatcher (p. 230). Common passage migrant, from late Feb to mid-May and from early Aug to mid-Oct; common breeding migrant from April to Sept. Passage migrants can show up almost anywhere; to 7,200 ft (2,200 m). Breeding migrants nest in northern half of CR, including the Central Valley; to 6,600 ft (2,000 m); it does not nest in Caribbean lowlands. A noisy inhabitant of gardens and forest edge, typically at upper levels. Call is a high, squeaky *swee-eeah*.

Tropical Kingbird *Tyrannus melancholicus*

8 in (20 cm). Very similar to Western Kingbird, but the **tail appears notched** when the bird is perched; in flight, note little contrast between olive back and dark olive-brown tail. Gray-capped Flycatcher (p. 248) has obvious white brow and bright yellow on upper breast. The rare Gray Kingbird (p. 252) is white below. One of the most common birds in CR; to 7,200 ft (2,200 m). Pairs or individuals inhabit gardens and open areas, often perching on utility wires. Call is a spritely *bee, bibididi*.

Western Kingbird *Tyrannus verticalis*

8 in (20 cm). Very similar to Tropical Kingbird, but the **tail appears square tipped** when the bird is perched; in flight, note contrast between olive back and black tail, which shows narrow white outer edges. Uncommon migrant in northern Pacific and western Central Valley, rare in southern Pacific; to 3,300 ft (1,000 m); from Nov to April. Favors gardens and open areas; a number of individuals are often found in the same area. Sometimes gives a shrill series of *pik* notes.



Tyrant Flycatchers

Eastern Kingbird — *Tyrannus tyrannus*

8 in (20 cm). The two-toned coloration and noticeable **white-tipped tail** are distinctive. In flight, note **dark underwing**. Abundant passage migrant in Caribbean lowlands, uncommon elsewhere; from early Sept to late Oct and from mid-March to early May; to 5,600 ft (1,700 m). Migrates through Caribbean lowlands in large numbers, flying in flocks of dozens of individuals. Usually silent in migration.

Gray Kingbird — *Tyrannus dominicensis*

9 in (23 cm). Brings to mind a Tropical Kingbird (p. 250), but is paler and lacks yellow on underparts. In flight, note **pale underwing**. Rare passage migrant along the Caribbean coast, from Sept to early Oct and in March; casual in Pacific lowlands. Most reports are of single birds accompanying flocks of Eastern Kingbirds.

Tityras, Becards, Allies

TITYRIDAE. The various genera in this assemblage have previously been included with the manakins, cotingas, or flycatchers, but are now placed in their own family. There are no outwardly obvious unifying characteristics of the group. All include both fruit and insects in their diets.

Barred Becard — *Pachyramphus versicolor*

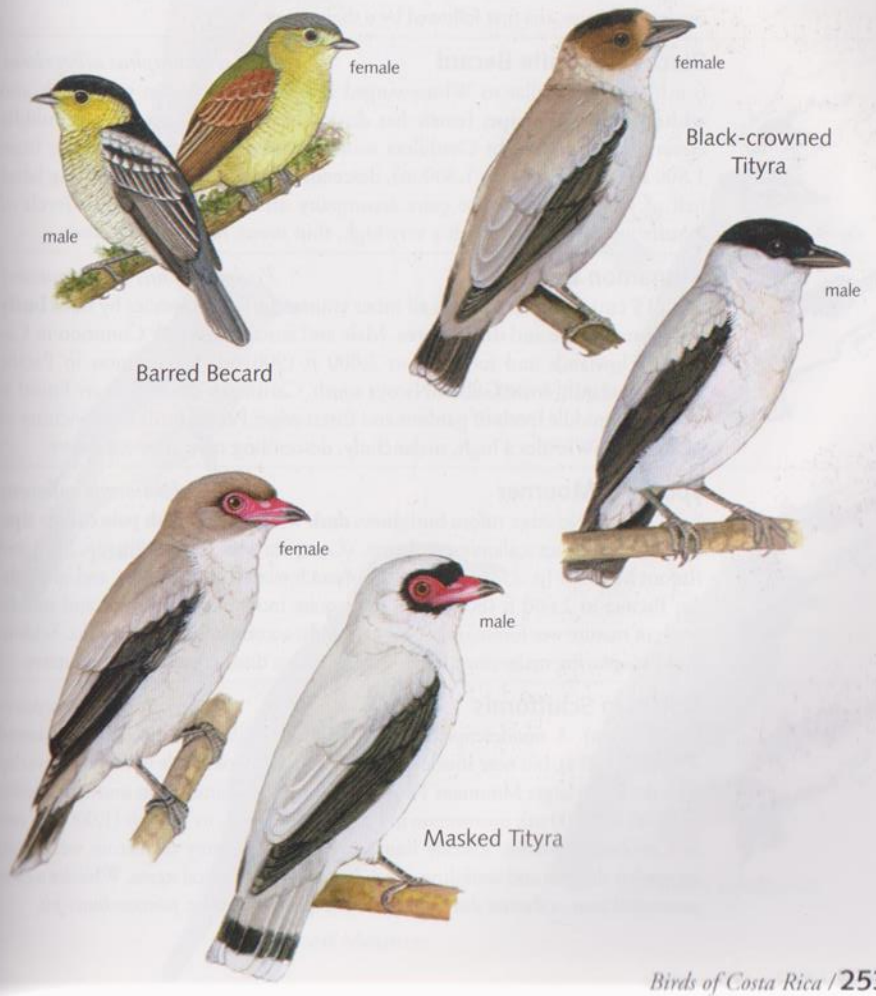
5 in (13 cm). Both sexes are uniquely patterned. Uncommon in highlands, from Tilarán Cordillera south; from 4,900 to 9,800 ft (1,500 to 3,000 m). Individuals or pairs forage in middle levels of montane forest, forest edge, and adjacent gardens; often with mixed flocks. Sings an energetic series of about ten notes: the first three notes rise in pitch, the following notes then maintain the same pitch but increase in pace until the last note, which drops in pitch.

Black-crowned Tityra — *Tityra inquisitor*

7 in (18 cm). Similar to Masked Tityra, but note **all-dark bill**. Male has **black crown**. Female has **chestnut sides of face**; chestnut color can appear reddish in certain light, thus increasing the resemblance to a female Masked Tityra. Widespread but uncommon; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Pairs or small groups visit fruiting trees in gardens and at forest edge. Infrequent vocalizations are softer than those of Masked Tityra.

Masked Tityra — *Tityra semifasciata*

8 in (20 cm). The **red orbital area** and **red basal half of bill** differentiate both sexes from the Black-crowned Tityra. Common and widespread; to 5,900 ft (1,800 m). Pairs or small groups visit fruiting trees in gardens and at forest edge. Frequently makes dry, buzzy squeaks that could suggest an insect noise or a bathtub toy.



Rose-throated Becard *Pachyramphus aglaiae*

7 in (18 cm). Resident male has **black crown** and **gray body**, migrant male is mostly dark with gray belly (neither has rose throat); females are identical. **Dark gray crown** distinguishes female from Cinnamon Becard. Fairly common resident in northern Pacific lowlands, uncommon in western Central Valley and in southern Pacific; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Casual migrant in Caribbean lowlands, from Nov to March. Pairs forage at middle and upper levels of dry forest, at forest edge, and in gardens. Gives a sharp, upwardly inflected *swee-ah*.

White-winged Becard *Pachyramphus polychopterus*

6 in (15 cm). Male distinguished from male Black-and-white Becard by **black upper back** and **black lores**. Female resembles a flycatcher in coloration and behavior, but note **buffy wing bars and wing edging**, and **buff-tipped tail feathers**. Uncommon in wet lowlands and foothills, rare in northern Pacific; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Individuals or pairs inhabit middle levels of second growth, forest edge, and gardens; in the northwest, found mostly in gallery forest. Sings a fast series of sweet *chew* notes, the first followed by a slight pause.

Black-and-white Becard *Pachyramphus albogriseus*

6 in (15 cm). Similar to White-winged Becard, but male has **gray back** and **white supraloral stripe**; female has distinctive **chestnut cap**. Rare at middle elevations, from Tilarán Cordillera south (mostly on Caribbean slope); from 1,600 to 5,900 ft (500 to 1,800 m), descends to adjacent lowlands during latter half of year. Individuals or pairs accompany mixed flocks at middle levels of mature wet forest. Calls with a very high, thin *sweea, sweea, sweea, sweea*.

Cinnamon Becard *Pachyramphus cinnamomeus*

6 in (15 cm). Told apart from all other cinnamon/rufous species by faint **buffy supraloral stripe** and **dusky lores**. Male and female identical. Common in Caribbean lowlands and foothills; to 3,000 ft (900 m). Uncommon in Pacific coastal lowlands, from Gulf of Nicoya south. Caribbean-slope birds are found at lower and middle levels of gardens and forest edge; Pacific birds favor vicinity of mangroves. Whistles a high, melancholy, descending *twee, twee-tee-tee-tee*.

Speckled Mourner *Laniocera rufescens*

8 in (20 cm). No other rufous bird shows **dark wing coverts with pale rufous tips**; also note indistinct scalloping on breast. (Compare with Rufous Piha [p. 260] and Rufous Mourner [p. 238].) Rare in Caribbean lowlands and foothills, and in southern Pacific; to 2,600 ft (800 m). Perches quite motionlessly at lower and middle levels of mature wet forest, often near wetlands; accompanies mixed flocks. Seldom heard; displaying males sing a clear *tlee, dee*, with a distinct pause between notes.

Northern Schiffornis *Schiffornis veraepacis*

6 in (15 cm). A nondescript olive-brown bird. Similar to female Tawny-crested Tanager (p. 314), but note smaller bill and "big-eyed" look. Little or no range overlap with the much larger Mountain Thrush (p. 270). Fairly common in southern Pacific, to 5,600 ft (1,700 m); uncommon in Caribbean foothills, to 3,300 ft (1,000 m); rare in Caribbean lowlands. Usually found singly in understory of mature wet forest; somewhat sluggish and confiding; perches sideways on vertical stems. Whistles a clear protracted note, a shorter slurred note, and a quick final note: *pweeeee-huwi-pit*.

Manakins

PIPRIDAE. A Neotropical family of small woodland birds. Predominantly frugivorous; their bills are short with a wide base. Males sport bright and/or contrasting plumage, while females are generally greenish; juvenile males resemble females and take a year or more to acquire adult plumage. The males perform courtship displays that vary from subtle to sublime. Females tend to the nesting chores.

Long-tailed Manakin *Chiroxiphia linearis*

Male 10 in (25 cm); female 6 in (15 cm). Male very similar to male Lance-tailed Manakin, but note **very long central tail feathers**; juvenile male shows red crown. Female virtually identical to female Lance-tailed Manakin (no range overlap). Female similar to female Orange-collared Manakin, but has protruding central tail feathers. Common in northern Pacific and western Central Valley, uncommon elsewhere in its range; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Forages at lower and middle levels of forest and advanced second growth. Calls include a liquid *who-wee-do* and a nasal *waahh*. Males display on low perches, while emitting an undulating *chur-wu, chur-wu*, with an underlying buzzy chatter.

Lance-tailed Manakin *Chiroxiphia lanceolata*

6 in (15 cm). Male very similar in appearance and behavior to male Long-tailed Manakin, but note short central tail feathers; juvenile male shows red crown. Female virtually identical to female Long-tailed Manakin (no range overlap). Fairly common near Panama border in southern Pacific; from 3,300 to 4,900 ft (1,000 to 1,500 m). Feeds at middle levels of humid forest and second growth.

White-collared Manakin *Manacus candei*

4 in (10 cm). The dapper male is unmistakable. Female and juvenile of this species are virtually identical to those of the Orange-collared Manakin (no range overlap); they can be distinguished from other small olive-green birds (e.g., flycatchers and euphonias) by their **bright-orange legs**. Common in Caribbean lowlands and foothills; to 3,000 ft (900 m). Stays in lower levels of second growth and forest edge. Gives a rippling *brrrreee* and a high *peee-peuw*; displaying males produce loud snapping and popping noises with their wings.

Orange-collared Manakin *Manacus aurantiacus*

4 in (10 cm). Male's **orange collar** is distinctive; female and juvenile of this species are virtually identical to those of White-collared Manakin (no range overlap). Female lacks protruding central tail feathers of female Long-tailed Manakin. Fairly common in southern Pacific lowlands and foothills; to 3,600 ft (1,100 m). Inhabits lower levels of mature wet forest, second growth, and forest edge. Calls with a slightly rising *chewwe*; in addition to wing snapping, displaying males also make a buzzing noise. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

White-ruffed Manakin *Corapipo altera*

4 in (10 cm). All-dark male has distinctive **white throat**. Female shows greater contrast between **grayish throat** and rest of body than do other female manakins. Common in middle elevations; from 1,300 to 3,300 ft (400 to 1,000 m) on Caribbean slope, from 3,300 to 4,900 ft (1,000 to 1,500 m) in southern Pacific, and above 2,000 ft (600 m) on Osa Peninsula. From July to Jan, often moves to lower elevations. Feeds at lower and middle levels of mature forest, second growth, and forest edge. Makes a high, squeaky, rolling *spweeea*.

Blue-crowned Manakin *Lepidothrix coronata*

4 in (10 cm). The **glittering-blue crown** on the otherwise black male is distinctive; female has **brighter green upperparts** than other CR manakins. Common in southern Pacific lowlands and foothills, to 4,600 ft (1,400 m); uncommon near Panama border on Caribbean slope, to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Found in lower levels of mature wet forest and advanced second growth. Displaying males give a fast, bubbly series of notes followed by a harsh *per-rreck!*

White-crowned Manakin *Dixiphia pipra*

4 in (10 cm). Male not likely confused; female has decidedly **grayish head** and **dark-red iris**. Uncommon on Caribbean slope of Central and Talamanca Cordilleras; from 1,600 to 4,900 ft (500 to 1,500 m). Favors lower and middle levels of mature wet forest and adjacent advanced second growth. Periodically utters a harsh, upwardly inflected *screeaah!*

Red-capped Manakin *Ceratopipra mentalis*

4 in (10 cm). Male is readily identified; female is **dull olive-green** with **pale pinkish bill**. Common in wet lowlands and uncommon in foothills; to 3,600 ft (1,100 m). Favors mature wet forest, but also occurs in second growth and sometimes gardens; feeds at lower and middle levels. Produces a looping, drawn-out *sp, sp, spweeeeee*, followed by a sharp *spip!*

Gray-headed Piprites *Piprites griseiceps*

5 in (13 cm). The combination of **white eye ring, yellow throat**, and **lack of wing bars** is distinctive. Unlike the manakins, is not sexually dimorphic. Rare in Caribbean lowlands and foothills; to 3,300 ft (1,000 m). Accompanies mixed flocks in lower and middle levels of mature wet forest and adjacent tall second growth. Call is a liquid *whit!*; sings an undulating two-second phrase of quick, sputtering notes. **Ranges from eastern Guatemala to extreme northwestern Panama.**

Sharpbill

OXYRUNCIDAE. Currently placed in its own family, the Sharpbill has often been considered a member of Cotingidae (cotingas), or even Tyrannidae (flycatchers). It has very spotty distribution throughout the neotropics, from CR to southeastern Brazil.

Sharpbill *Oxyruncus cristatus*
7 in (18 cm). Seen from below, could be confused with the Speckled Tanager (p. 320), but is distinguished by its **plain-olive upperparts** and **sharply pointed bill**. Rare in foothills and middle elevations of Caribbean slope, from the Miravalles Volcano south; from 1,600 to 4,600 ft (500 to 1,400 m). Stays at upper levels of mature wet forest and forest edge; joins mixed flocks, though quite unobtrusive. Makes a high, buzzy, arcing trill: *tseeeeeuuuuuh*.

Cotingas

COTINGIDAE. Members of this incredibly varied Neotropical family share no single morphological trait that aids the observer in assigning them to this family. Likewise, internal anatomy, vocalizations, and behavior differ widely among the sixty or so species currently placed here. With the exception of the Rufous Piha, the species found in CR should not present any great identification challenges.

Rufous Piha *Lipaugus unirufus*
9 in (23 cm). Virtually identical to the Rufous Mourner (p. 238)—best told apart by voice. Fairly common on southern Pacific slope, uncommon on Caribbean slope; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Favors middle levels of mature wet forest; can be difficult to see because it perches placidly and its periodic vocalizations are quite ventriloquial. Delivers a loud, vibrant *PEEAAH!* and also a whistled *whee-ur-weet*.

Lovely Cotinga *Cotinga amabilis*
8 in (20 cm). Very similar to Turquoise Cotinga, but no range overlap. Colorful male not likely confused (compare, however, with male Blue Dacnis [p. 322]); overall size, shape, and coloration of female could bring to mind a dove or thrush, but none of these appear **scaled above** and **spotted below**. Rare in Caribbean foothills and middle elevations, from Miravalles Volcano south; from 1,600 to 5,600 ft (500 to 1,700 m); casual in Caribbean lowlands. Feeds on fruit in canopy of mature wet forest and in tall trees of adjacent open areas.

Turquoise Cotinga *Cotinga ridgwayi*
7 in (18 cm). Both sexes very similar to Lovely Cotinga, but no range overlap (compare male with male Blue Dacnis [p. 322]). Male has **black eye ring** and shows black feather bases on shoulders and back; overall size, shape, and coloration of female could bring to mind a dove or thrush, but none of these appear **scaled above** and **spotted below**. Uncommon in southern Pacific; to 5,900 ft (1,800 m). Perches and feeds in canopy of mature wet forest, as well as in partially cleared areas. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Sharpbill

Rufous Piha

male

Lovely Cotinga

female

male

Turquoise Cotinga

female

Yellow-billed Cotinga *Carpodectes antoniae*

8 in (20 cm). Male and female very similar to respective sexes of Snowy Cotinga (but no range overlap); note **yellow bill**. Uncommon in southern Pacific lowlands and rare in adjacent foothills; to 2,600 ft (800 m). Actively forages for fruit in canopy of mature wet forest and in tall trees of adjacent open areas; also found in mangroves. Generally silent. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Snowy Cotinga *Carpodectes nitidus*

8 in (20 cm). Male and female very similar to respective sexes of Yellow-billed Cotinga (but no range overlap); note **grayish bill**. Also, tends to be more sluggish in its movements and is not known to visit mangroves. Uncommon in Caribbean lowlands; rarely to 2,300 ft (700 m). **Ranges from northern Honduras to western Panama.**

Purple-throated Fruitcrow *Querula purpurata*

11 in (28 cm). The male's magenta throat can be difficult to see in backlight conditions—and the female and juvenile are entirely black—but the **broad, light-gray bill** and chunky proportions (with broad wings and short tail) should distinguish this species from other medium-sized black birds. Fairly common in wet Caribbean lowlands; to 1,600 ft (500 m). Noisy groups of four or more birds move through middle and upper levels of mature wet forest, forest edge, and adjacent gardens, sometimes with mixed flocks. Gives a querulous, throaty *quaah, quaah*.

Three-wattled Bellbird *Procnias tricarunculatus*

Male 12 in (30 cm); female 10 in (25 cm). Adult male is unique; female somewhat resembles a flycatcher in coloration, but note her large size and lack of facial markings. Juvenile male looks like female, but has short wattles. Common breeding migrant, from March to July, in Tilarán Cordillera (from 3,900 to 5,200 ft [1,200 to 1,600 m]) and Talamanca Cordillera (from 4,600 to 7,900 ft [1,400 to 2,400 m]), also breeds in Guanacaste and Central Cordilleras and on hills of Nicoya Peninsula; disperses to lower elevations after breeding, probably following regular annual routes. Forages at middle and upper levels of mature wet forest, humid forest, and advanced second growth. Male calls from high, bare perches with sounds that include a very loud *EENK!* and an extremely high-pitched utterance. **Ranges from eastern Honduras to western Panama.**

Bare-necked Umbrellabird *Cephalopterus glabricollis*

Male 17 in (43 cm); female 14 in (36 cm). The male only inflates his spectacular scarlet throat sac during breeding displays; nonetheless, his size and **distinctive crest** should preclude identification problems. Even females, which are smaller and have shorter crests, are fairly distinctive. Uncommon on Caribbean slope from Miravalles Volcano south. Breeds from March to June at middle elevations, from 2,600 to 6,600 ft (800 to 2,000 m); then migrates down to foothills and contiguous lowlands, from 160 to 1,600 ft (50 to 500 m). Inhabits lower and middle levels of mature wet forest. Generally silent, though wings produce a deep rustling in flight; displaying males emit a deep, hollow *huuU!* **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

CORVIDAE. A widespread family that is familiar to many birders. CR's five representatives are all omnivorous, noisy, active foragers, though one species, the Black-chested Jay, is a bit more furtive.

Silvery-throated Jay *Cyanolyca argentigula*

10 in (25 cm). The **silvery-white throat** is diagnostic on this small, dark jay. Rare in highlands of Irazú and Turrialba Volcanoes and the Talamanca Cordillera; from 6,600 to 10,500 ft (2,000 to 3,200 m). Pairs or groups forage at middle and upper levels of mature oak forest. Utters a harsh *nyah-nyah-nyah-nyah*. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Azure-hooded Jay *Cyanolyca cucullata*

11 in (28 cm). A distinctive bird, with a **powder-blue crown** that contrasts with its **deep-blue body**. Uncommon at middle elevations of Caribbean slope, from 2,600 to 6,600 ft (800 to 2,000 m); also uncommon on Pacific side of Tilarán Cordillera and in Dota region, from 4,600 to 6,600 ft (1,400 to 2,000 m). Groups forage at all levels in mature wet forest. Has a number of calls, including a screeching *eet-eet*, a hoarse *aaak*, and a shrill *eenk, eenk*.

White-throated Magpie-Jay *Calocitta formosa*

19 in (48 cm). Unmistakable. Common throughout the northern Pacific; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Seems to be extending its range south along the Pacific coast, with sightings south of Dominical; also spreading in northern central region, with reports from the region between the Arenal Volcano and Guápiles; has entered western Central Valley (to Santa Ana and Belén). Noisy groups travel through both forested and more open areas, including gardens. Varied vocalizations range from raspy scolding notes to sweet oriole-like chirping.

Black-chested Jay *Cyanocorax affinis*

13 in (33 cm). Plumage pattern similar to Brown Jay, but has **blue-violet upperparts** and **yellow iris**. Uncommon in southern Caribbean lowlands, from Limón south; uncommon near San Vito in southern Pacific. Small groups move through all levels of vegetation in forest, forest edge, and gardens. Not as bold or obvious as other jays in CR. Among its many calls is a liquid *chew-chew-chew-chewp*.

Brown Jay *Psilorhinus morio*

15 in (38 cm). No other CR jay is **dark brown above**. Juvenile has yellow bill and eye ring. Common from foothills to middle elevations, uncommon in lowlands, rare or absent on much of southern Pacific slope; to 7,500 ft (2,300 m). Boisterous parties roam through trees, avoiding mature-forest habitats. Attends army-ant swarms. Gives a rather shrill and agitated *piyah, piyah*; makes an audible popping noise with its special throat sac.

TURDIDAE. The CR members of this widespread family sport rather drab plumage, though some species have bright orange or yellow bill, legs, and/or eye ring. Juveniles of most species have spotted plumage. Many are more pleasing to the ear than to the eye (the Clay-colored Thrush [p. 270], for example, was named the national bird of Costa Rica for its melodious song). Note that four of the CR *Turdus* species formerly known as *robins* are now called *thrushes*.

Black-billed Nightingale-Thrush *Catharus gracilirostris*
6 in (15 cm). A relatively slender nightingale-thrush with a **black bill**; also note **brown wash across breast** that separates gray throat from gray belly. Common in highlands, from 7,200 ft (2,200 m) to timberline; fairly common above timberline. Inhabits understory of oak forest and adjacent gardens and clearings, also in paramo; often very confiding. Its song, though somewhat muddled, retains the flute-like essence of the genus. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Ruddy-capped Nightingale-Thrush *Catharus frantzii*
6 in (15 cm). Told apart from other nightingale-thrushes by its **bicolored bill** and distinctly **reddish-brown crown**. Absence of eye ring further sets it apart from Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush. Common in highlands; from 4,900 to 8,200 ft (1,500 to 2,500 m). Forages close to the ground in montane forest; at dawn and dusk, comes out into the open in adjacent gardens and clearings. Sings varied phrases with distinctive quality of nightingale-thrushes.

Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush *Catharus aurantiirostris*
6 in (15 cm). This species and both the Slaty-backed and Black-headed Nightingale-Thrushes all have orange bills, but note **brown back**. (Southern CR race has distinctly gray crown.) Similar to Ruddy-capped Nightingale-Thrush, but has eye ring. Fairly common at middle elevations on the Pacific slopes of the Tilarán, Central, and Talamanca Cordilleras, from 1,600 to 7,200 ft (500 to 2,200 m); also on higher hills of Nicoya Peninsula. Forages at low levels in tangled second growth, shady gardens, and coffee plantations. Song is more varied, faster, and less melodic than that of other nightingale-thrushes.

Slaty-backed Nightingale-Thrush *Catharus fuscater*
7 in (18 cm). The **pale iris** distinguishes it from other nightingale-thrushes. Similar to the larger Sooty Thrush (p. 268), but has **whitish belly** (no range overlap). Common at middle elevations of Caribbean slope, from 2,600 to 5,900 ft (800 to 1,800 m); also common at upper elevations on Pacific slope of Tilarán Cordillera and in the Dota region. Forages in forest understory; at dawn and dusk, often hops along trails. Song recalls that of Black-faced Solitaire (p. 268), but is lower pitched and less complex—lacks final shrill note; typical version slides up, then down the scale: *tlee-dee, teedle-doo*.

Black-headed Nightingale-Thrush *Catharus mexicanus*
6 in (15 cm). Most closely resembles Slaty-backed Nightingale-Thrush, but note **dark iris** and contrast between **dark-olive back** and **black crown**. Common in Caribbean foothills, from 1,000 to 3,300 ft (300 to 1,000 m); uncommon on Pacific slope of Guanacaste and Tilarán Cordilleras, from 2,300 to 4,300 ft (700 to 1,300 m). Stays low in mature forest. Song has a flute-like quality typical of nightingale-thrushes, but with some slightly harsh and fuzzy parts.

Veery *Catharus fuscescens*

7 in (18 cm). Distinguished from Swainson's and Gray-cheeked Thrushes by redder upperparts and less distinct breast spotting. An uncommon passage migrant, from Sept to Oct and from March to April; mostly near Caribbean coast, occasionally into foothills, and even Central Valley. Stays on or near ground in mature forest and second growth, typically near water and with other migrant thrushes.

Gray-cheeked Thrush *Catharus minimus*

7 in (18 cm). Closely resembles Swainson's Thrush, but has only **pale, indistinct eye ring**. Also compare with Veery. An uncommon passage migrant, from late Sept to mid-Nov, on Caribbean slope and in Central Valley; rare winter resident on both slopes. Stays on or near ground in second growth and gardens, usually near water and with other migrant thrushes.

Swainson's Thrush *Catharus ustulatus*

7 in (18 cm). The **prominent buffy spectacles** differentiate it from the very similar Gray-cheeked Thrush. Also compare with Veery. A common and widespread passage migrant, from late Sept to mid-Nov and from late March to mid-May; an uncommon winter resident; to 9,200 ft (2,800 m). More arboreal than other migrant thrushes; occurs in a wide range of habitats. Spring migrants often sing rising, flute-like phrases.

Wood Thrush *Hylocichla mustelina*

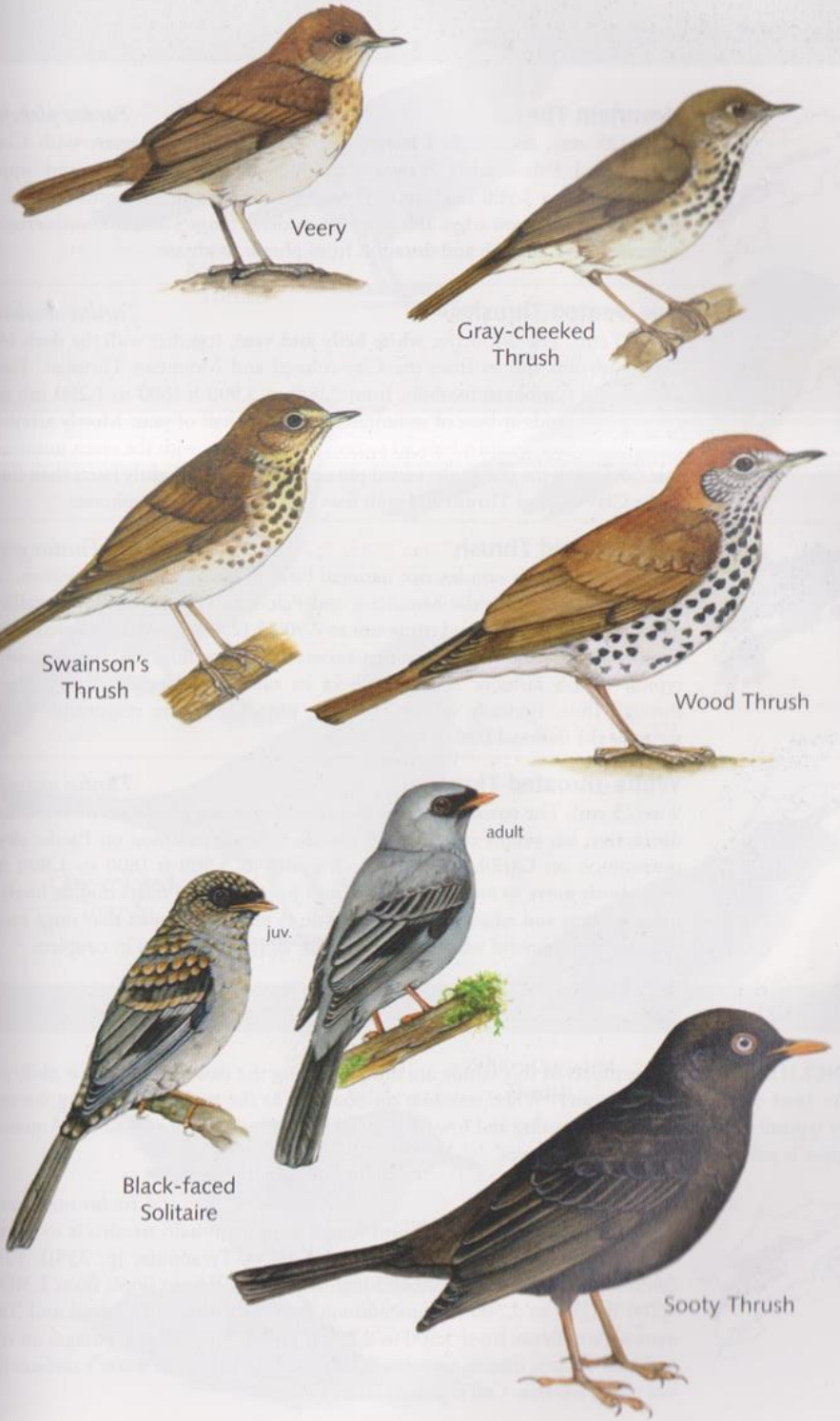
8 in (20 cm). The **heavily spotted underparts** and **rufous crown** are diagnostic. A fairly common migrant, from Oct to April; to 5,600 ft (1,700 m). Usually seen on or near the ground in mature wet forest or advanced second growth; can often be seen foraging on trails at dawn and dusk. In alarm, utters a quick *pik-pik-pik*.

Black-faced Solitaire *Myadestes melanops*

7 in (18 cm). No other CR thrush with **orange bill and legs** is so **uniformly slate gray** or has a **contrasting black face**. Common at middle and upper elevations, from 3,300 to 9,200 ft (1,000 to 2,800 m); descends to 1,300 ft (400 m) on Caribbean slope in second half of year. Dwells in lower and middle levels of montane wet forest. Most often seen while feeding on berries; extremely difficult to locate when singing. Its unhurried, ethereal song is a characteristic feature of montane wet forests; it combines pure flute-like tones with a shrill note that sounds like a rusty gate hinge. (If flute-like tones are heard without shrill note, could suggest song of Slaty-backed Nightingale-Thrush [p. 266].) **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Sooty Thrush *Turdus nigrescens*

10 in (25 cm). No other **entirely black plumaged** bird in CR has **orange bill, eye ring, and legs**; also note **pale iris**. Distinguished from similar Slaty-backed Nightingale-Thrush (p. 266) by black belly (no range overlap). Common above 7,900 ft (2,400 m). Forages on ground in open areas and at forest edge. Call is a harsh, jay-like *ret-ret-ret*. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**



Mountain Thrush *Turdus plebejus*

10 in (25 cm). A dull, dark thrush with a **black bill**. Compare with Clay-colored and Pale-vented Thrushes. Fairly common at middle and upper elevations; from 3,900 ft (1,200 m) to timberline. Mostly arboreal; found in highland forest, forest edge, and adjacent gardens. Sings a monotonous series of notes that vary in pitch and duration from phrase to phrase.

Pale-vented Thrush *Turdus obsoletus*

9 in (23 cm). The distinctive **white belly and vent**, together with the **dark bill**, distinguish this species from the Clay-colored and Mountain Thrushes. Fairly common in Caribbean foothills, from 2,000 to 3,900 ft (600 to 1,200 m); migrates to lowlands at base of mountains in second half of year. Mostly arboreal; occurs in wet forest and advanced second growth. Sings with the sweet unmistakable caroling of the genus; the varied phrases are delivered slightly faster than those of the Clay-colored Thrush and with fewer pauses between the phrases.

Clay-colored Thrush *Turdus grayi*

9 in (23 cm). CR's nondescript national bird, known locally as *el yigüirro*, can be distinguished from the Mountain and Pale-vented Thrushes by its **yellow-green bill**. Widespread and common, to 7,900 ft (2,400 m), though uncommon in northern Pacific. A true garden-variety bird that hops on the ground in typical thrush fashion; routinely flicks its tail upon landing. From March through June, tirelessly whistles melodic phrases that are responsible for its status as the national bird of Costa Rica.

White-throated Thrush *Turdus assimilis*

9 in (23 cm). The **streaked throat bordered below by a bold white crescent** is distinctive; has yellow eye ring, bill, and feet. Fairly common on Pacific slope, uncommon on Caribbean slope; from 2,600 to 5,900 ft (800 to 1,800 m). Some birds move to lower elevations from June to Dec. Prefers middle levels of mature forest and adjacent second growth. A talented vocalist that sings varied phrases, from tuneful whistles to thin trills, all typically given in couplets.

Dippers

CINCLIDAE. The five members of this family are unique among the passerines for their ability to swim (and even walk) underwater. When standing on boulders in the middle of rushing streams, they typically bob up and down, raising and lowering their short tails. The CR race of the American Dipper is paler than its northern relatives.

American Dipper *Cinclus mexicanus*

7 in (18 cm). No other small bird found along mountain streams is so **plump** and so **grayish overall** (compare with Torrent Tyrannulet [p. 238]). Fairly common in middle elevations and highlands of Caribbean slope, from 2,300 to 8,200 ft (700 to 2,500 m); uncommon on Pacific slope of Central and Talamanca Cordilleras, from 5,600 to 8,200 ft (1,700 to 2,500 m). Forages on river rocks for aquatic insects, sometimes disappearing below the water's surface; flies low along streams. Call is a sharp, buzzy *dzeet*.

Mockingbirds

MIMIDAE. A New World family of birds characterized by long tails and thin, narrow bills; most species have brown or gray plumage. Members of this family display a variety of habits; some species are extremely furtive, others are downright brazen.

Gray Catbird *Dumetella carolinensis*

8 in (20 cm). The only gray bird in CR that has a **black cap** and a **rufous vent**. A fairly common winter resident (from early Sept to early May) and passage migrant, throughout Caribbean lowlands; note, however, that passage migrants can show up almost anywhere in the country. Usually difficult to see since it forages in tangled second growth and forest edge; most commonly shows itself in early morning. Gives a *mew* reminiscent of a cat.

Tropical Mockingbird *Mimus gilvus*

10 in (25 cm). Fairly nondescript, perhaps recalling a washed-out female Great-tailed Grackle (p. 358), but note **white-tipped tail feathers** and **narrow wing bars**. Since the turn of the century, has become widespread and definitely established in many sites, but is still generally uncommon; to 5,600 ft (1,700 m). Prefers open areas (including fields, soccer fields, and urban gardens). An accomplished singer; despite its name, it does not seem to imitate other birds as often as some other mockingbirds do. However, in CR it has been heard doing renditions of both Common Pauraque (p. 126) and Clay-colored Thrush (p. 270).

Silky-flycatchers

PTILOGONATIDAE. A family of just four species, each with a limited distribution and range; the two CR representatives are highland endemics. Despite their common name, silky-flycatchers are more closely related to the thrushes and waxwings than to the tyrant flycatchers, and they eat fruit more often than they eat insects.

Black-and-yellow Silky-flycatcher *Phainoptila melanoxantha*

8 in (20 cm). Size and rotund shape could suggest a thrush (see species on p. 270), but **yellow flanks** are diagnostic (male also has yellow rump). Fairly common in highlands; above 3,900 ft (1,200 m) in Guanacaste and Tilarán Cordilleras, and from 5,900 ft (1,800 m) to timberline in Central and Talamanca Cordilleras. Rather sedentary; feeds on berries at middle levels and in canopy of montane forest and forest edge. Gives a high, thin *tsip*. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Long-tailed Silky-flycatcher *Ptilogonys caudatus*

9 in (23 cm). The **prominent crest**, long tail, and (on male) unique coloration are diagnostic; female is duller, with olive head and body. Fairly common in Central and Talamanca Cordilleras; from 5,200 ft (1,600 m) to timberline. Found in forest, forest edge, and gardens; typically perches upright at tips of branches located near the top of tall trees, but can be seen as low as eye level when it feeds on fruit of shrubs. Makes a wooden and staccato (but sweet) chittering. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Waxwings

BOMBYCILLIDAE. A boreal family of sleek, crested birds. Typically travel in gregarious flocks, feeding on berries and occasionally fly-catching in the manner of a kingbird. In silhouette, the upright stance of perched birds could suggest the Eastern Kingbird (p. 252).

Cedar Waxwing *Bombycilla cedrorum*

7 in (18 cm). **Crest, black mask**, and relatively **short, squared-off tail** are distinctive. Occurs as an infrequent, though irruptive, migrant between Dec and mid-May; most likely in highlands. Small flocks (and sometimes lone individuals) visit fruiting trees in clearings and gardens. In flight, gives a high, thin, hissing trill.

Gnatwrens, Gnatcatchers

POLIOPTILIDAE. The members of this New World family are all small, active birds. Formerly included in the same family as many Old World warblers (Sylviidae), they are now considered to be more closely related to the wrens (p. 276).

Tawny-faced Gnatwren *Microbates cinereiventris*

4 in (10 cm). Its general shape and habits could suggest a wren (p. 276), but note the **tawny face** and **white throat**. Fairly common in Caribbean lowlands and foothills; to 3,300 ft (1,000 m). Inhabits understory of mature wet forest. Sometimes accompanies mixed flocks; often follows raiding army ants. Makes a wren-like chatter and a shrill *peeea*.

Long-billed Gnatwren *Ramphocaenus melanurus*

5 in (13 cm). The **long thin bill** and **long narrow tail** (with white feather tips) should preclude any confusion. Common in humid areas; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m); restricted to evergreen patches in northern Pacific. Pokes about in thickets and tangled vines in forest openings, forest edge, and adjacent second growth. Frequently sings a staccato trill, which can vary in quality from wooden to dulcet, lasting about two seconds and often rising slightly at the end.

White-lored Gnatcatcher *Polioptila albiloris*

4 in (10 cm). Very similar to Tropical Gnatcatcher. Breeding male has entirely black cap. Nonbreeding male (from about Sept to Jan) and female are told apart from respective sexes of Tropical Gnatcatcher by **narrow white superciliary**. Also compare with Chestnut-sided Warbler (p. 302). Fairly common in northern Pacific, south to Tárcoles; to 2,300 ft (700 m). Pairs forage in second growth, forest edge, and open areas with trees; often holds tail cocked up. Makes a complaining *iyaah* and a high, emphatic *tsee-tsee-tsee-tsee-tsee-tsee*.

Tropical Gnatcatcher *Polioptila plumbea*

4 in (10 cm). Where range overlaps with White-lored Gnatcatcher, be sure to check for the **broad white superciliary** in both sexes. Also compare with Chestnut-sided Warbler (p. 302). Common in wet lowlands and middle elevations, to 3,900 ft (1,200 m); uncommon in northern Pacific and western Central Valley. Pairs forage actively at all levels in second growth, forest edge, and gardens; often holds tail cocked up. Gives a nasal *myew*; song is a descending series of fast, high chirps.

Cedar Waxwing

Tawny-faced Gnatwren

Long-billed Gnatwren

White-lored Gnatcatcher

Tropical Gnatcatcher

TROGLODYTIDAE. Barring on the wings and/or tail is a key characteristic of this family. Also note the long, slender bill, which is slightly curved in many species. Though active and very vocal, many wrens can be frustratingly difficult to see since they forage for arthropods in dense tangles and thick vegetation. Learning their calls is the best way of detecting their presence. Once a bird is actually seen, note color and markings on head, throat, and breast.

Rufous-naped Wren *Campylorhynchus rufinucha*

7 in (18 cm). A large, bold species that might be mistaken for a Great Kiskadee or its look-alikes (p. 248) because of the **black-and-white striped head**; none of those birds, however, have barring on the wings and tail. Common in northern Pacific and into the western half of the Central Valley; to 3,300 ft (1,000 m). Forages at middle and lower levels of dry forest, second growth, and gardens, often around human habitations. Pairs and family members call back and forth with a potpourri of both musical and grating notes.

Band-backed Wren *Campylorhynchus zonatus*

7 in (18 cm). The **boldly spotted breast** and **banded back** distinguish this large wren (Spot-breasted Wren has a plain-brown back). Fairly common on Caribbean slope; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Forages on branches and trunks of trees at middle and lower levels of forest edge and gardens; often conspicuous. Utters a squeaky, scratchy series of notes that have a certain lilting rhythm.

Rock Wren *Salpinctes obsoletus*

6 in (15 cm). A rather drab wren, but note **fairly long tail with black subterminal band and buff tip**. A true habitat specialist; found only in open situations (e.g., grassy hillsides, rocky slopes, and ravines) along the Pacific face of the Guanacaste Cordillera; from 1,600 to 4,900 ft (500 to 1,500 m). The feeble song is a sequence of short phrases, each consisting of four to ten repeated notes—some shrill, some sweet.

Rufous-breasted Wren *Pheugopedius rutilus*

5 in (13 cm). **White speckling on black cheeks and throat** and **bright rufous breast** are unique traits among CR wrens. Common in foothills and middle elevations of southern Pacific, reaching sea level in the Carara NP area; from 1,000 to 5,900 ft (300 to 1,800 m). Uncommon in foothills and middle elevations of northern Pacific from Tenorio Volcano south to western Central Valley; from 1,000 to 4,600 ft (300 to 1,400 m). Tends to forage fairly high in trees at forest edge and in gardens; often in vine tangles. The song consists of several brisk musical phrases, not as mellow or full-bodied as those of other members of the genus.

Spot-breasted Wren *Pheugopedius maculipectus*

5 in (13 cm). A **brown-backed** wren with a **heavily spotted breast** (Band-backed Wren has a banded back). Fairly common in lowlands of Caño Negro region. Forages in lower and middle levels of trees in gardens, as well as in low, dense vegetation. The sweet, whistled song is slightly less complex than that of many others in the genus.

Stripe-breasted Wren — *Cantorchilus thoracicus*

5 in (13 cm). The only wren in CR with **streaked throat and breast**. Common in Caribbean lowlands and foothills; to 3,300 ft (1,000 m). Pairs forage in lower levels of mature wet forest and forest edge. Delivers a series of clear, even-pitched whistles that recall the vocalization of the Central American Pygmy-Owl (p. 122). Also quickly repeats a short phrase of dulcet tones, then switches to another phrase. **Endemic from eastern Nicaragua to western Panama.**

Riverside Wren — *Cantorchilus semibadius*

5 in (13 cm). This bird has **rich rufous upperparts** and **finely barred black-and-white underparts** (the Rufous-and-white Wren has mostly white underparts). Common in southern Pacific; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Pairs or small groups forage low in dense vegetation inside mature wet forest and at forest edge (despite its name, not confined to riversides); regularly comes into view. Sings loud, sweet, fast-paced songs that are not quite as explosive as those of the Bay Wren. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Bay Wren — *Cantorchilus nigricapillus*

6 in (15 cm). The **chestnut body** and **white throat and facial markings** readily differentiate the Bay Wren (like most birds in this genus, however, it can be difficult to see). Common in Caribbean lowlands and foothills; to 3,300 ft (1,000 m). Almost always found near watercourses, working its way through thick shrubbery. The powerful voice veritably explodes from vegetation with rapidly repeated phrases.

Rufous-and-white Wren — *Thryophilus rufalbus*

6 in (15 cm). Combination of **bright-rufous upperparts**, black streaking on cheeks; and **mostly white underparts** with **barred vent** is unique. Common in foothills of northern Pacific and western Central Valley, from 1,000 to 3,600 ft (300 to 1,100 m); also common in evergreen forest and mangroves of northwestern lowlands, south to Carara NP; uncommon in Térraba River basin. Song is a deep, rich sequence of toots and trills abruptly ending on a higher pitched note.

Banded Wren — *Thryophilus pleurostictus*

5 in (13 cm). Though this species resembles several other CR wrens, the **black barring on the sides and flanks** is unique. Common in northern Pacific lowlands and western Central Valley; to 2,600 ft (800 m). Forages in understory of dry forest, thickets, and also mangroves. A fine singer; the clear musical phrases often contain a rattling *kreeEEee* (like the sound produced by one of those cork-lined bird call devices).

Plain Wren — *Cantorchilus modestus*

5 in (13 cm). A fairly drab, brown-backed wren; the combination of **white superciliary, white throat**, and **buffy flanks** is diagnostic. (Compare with Rufous-and-white Wren.) The duller and grayer birds of the Caribbean lowlands were once considered a separate species: Canebrake Wren (*C. zeledoni*). Common on Pacific slope and in the Central Valley, to 6,600 ft (2,000 m); fairly common in Caribbean lowlands; uncommon in northern Pacific lowlands. Forages at lower levels of overgrown vegetation in nonforest habitats. The CR common name derives from its typical song: *chinchirigüí*.

Black-bellied Wren *Pheugopedius fasciatoventris*

6 in (15 cm). The **immaculate white throat and breast** contrast sharply with the black belly, which is finely barred posteriorly. Fairly common in southern Pacific lowlands; to 1,600 ft (500 m). Prefers to conceal itself within dense *Heliconia* thickets and vine tangles along streamsides and forest edge. Its rich, liquid phrases and slurred musical *chooup* reveal its presence. **Ranges from CR to western Colombia.**

Black-throated Wren *Pheugopedius atrogularis*

6 in (15 cm). A **dark-brown** wren with **black throat and chest**. Fairly common in Caribbean lowlands and foothills; to 3,600 ft (1,100 m). Skulks in dense, overgrown vegetation; far more often heard than seen. Sings a loud series of about five whistles and chirps, terminating in either a trill or three short, even whistles. **Endemic from eastern Nicaragua to western Panama.**

Ochraceous Wren *Troglodytes ochraceus*

4 in (10 cm). Similar to the House Wren, but note **rich cinnamon-brown coloration** and **prominent buffy superciliary**. Common at middle and upper elevations, from Tilarán Cordillera south; from 3,000 to 9,800 ft (900 to 3,000 m). Forages on epiphyte-laden trunks and branches at middle levels of mature wet montane forest and adjacent gardens; often with mixed flocks. The thin song is rapid and high-pitched. **Endemic to CR and Panama.**

House Wren *Troglodytes aedon*

4 in (10 cm). A small, brown, fairly unpatterned bird; it does show **narrow barring on the wings and tail** and an **indistinct superciliary**. Common and widespread, to 9,200 ft (2,800 m); uncommon in northern Pacific. Usually around buildings and in weedy pastures. Vocalizes from an exposed perch; utters a spirited, bubbly song that mixes musical trills and chattering (similar to song of Tropical Parula [p. 300]).

Sedge Wren *Cistothorus platensis*

4 in (10 cm). The only **streak-backed** wren in CR, where it is fairly common in wet fields in the vicinity of Cartago. Its limited habitat is rapidly disappearing, however. Generally skulking, it occasionally makes a short, low flight over the grass before dropping down into cover. From atop a clump of vegetation, sings variable phrases, often with a scratchy and/or shrill quality.

Timberline Wren *Thryorchilus browni*

4 in (10 cm). The **white edging on the primaries** is diagnostic. Fairly common in highlands above 8,900 ft (2,700 m). Forages in bamboo and dense shrubbery. The wren-like song, neither full-bodied nor exceedingly musical, is a rapid delivery of high warbles and trills. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Song Wren *Cyphorhinus phaeocephalus*

5 in (13 cm). The **thickish bill** and large area of **blue-gray orbital skin** could suggest some antbirds (see species on p. 216), but note the **barring on the wings and tail**, which no antbird has. Uncommon in Caribbean lowlands, reaching foothills along Guanacaste Cordillera; to 3,300 ft (1,000 m). Small groups forage on or near the ground in mature wet forest and adjacent advanced second growth, sometimes accompanying other species. The amazing song incorporates clear, melodious whistles superimposed on harsh, hen-like clucking; several birds often join together in song.

White-breasted Wood-Wren *Henicorhina leucosticta*

4 in (10 cm). A **small, short-tailed** wren with white superciliary, black-and-white streaked cheeks, and **white throat and breast** (the lowland counterpart of the Gray-breasted Wood-Wren). Common in Caribbean lowlands and foothills, to 3,900 ft (1,200 m); common at middle elevations in southern Pacific, to 5,900 ft (1,800 m); rare in southern Pacific lowlands. Active and noisy, it mostly forages on or near the ground in mature wet forest and adjacent advanced second growth. Produces an often-heard chattering, a piercing *cheet* call note, and quite a variety of clear, whistled phrases (similar to song of Gray-breasted Wood-Wren).

Gray-breasted Wood-Wren *Henicorhina leucophrys*

4 in (10 cm). The highland counterpart of the White-breasted Wood-Wren, but note **gray breast**. Abundant from 2,600 ft (800 m) to timberline. Dwells in understory of wet montane forest and forest edge. Its loud, lengthy, rollicking melody is one of the most commonly heard and attention-grabbing sounds in its habitat. Utters a chatter similar to that of the White-breasted Wood-Wren.

Scaly-breasted Wren *Microcerculus marginatus*

4 in (10 cm). A close relative of the Nightingale Wren (no range overlap), though it is lighter colored and has a **pale throat and breast**. (Despite its name, the CR race does not have scaling on the breast.) Common in wet lowlands and foothills on both slopes of the southern half of CR; to 5,600 ft (1,700 m). Walks along the floor of mature wet forest, often near streams and ravines. After a quick introductory phrase of several short notes, the "song"—consisting of widely-spaced, successively lower-pitched, shrill, whistled notes—sometimes lasts several minutes; the whistled notes could recall those of a Tawny-crowned Greenlet (p. 288).

Nightingale Wren *Microcerculus philomela*

4 in (10 cm). A **small, dark**, essentially terrestrial wren with an **extremely short tail** (no range overlap with similar Scaly-breasted Wren). Fairly common in foothills and adjacent lowlands on the northern half of the Caribbean slope; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Prefers mature wet forest. Since very difficult to see, one should learn to enjoy (and settle for) the extraordinary vocalization that unhurriedly wanders up and down the scale, not quite staying in key.

VIREONIDAE. A New World family that includes vireos, greenlets, shrike-vireos, and peppershrikes. Members of this family are generally attired in drab olive along with greens, yellows, and sometimes white. Most species (except the greenlets) have fairly strong, hook-tipped bills. The vireos resemble New World warblers (p. 290), but have heavier bills and tend to be less active. Most species sing frequently if not very melodically.

White-eyed Vireo *Vireo griseus*

5 in (13 cm). The only vireo in CR that combines **yellow spectacles, white wing bars**, and **white throat**. Juvenile has a dark iris. A casual migrant known from a handful of records along the Caribbean coast as well as one record from the Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí area (Jan 2004), one report of a bird seen and heard in Monteverde (March 1997), and a bird mist-netted at Bahía Culebra (Dec 2007). Song, which may be heard in March or April, is harsh and fast with a burry quality.

Mangrove Vireo *Vireo pallens*

4 in (10 cm). A **drab** vireo with **yellow lores** and **narrow white wing bars**. Fairly common in northern Pacific mangroves, south to Tárcoles; there is also a report of a bird heard at Coronado de Térraba (Nov 2011), well south of the known range. Will often respond if one makes pishing and squeaking noises. Sings a scratchy, monotone *chi-chi-chi-chi-chi-chi-chi*.

Yellow-throated Vireo *Vireo flavifrons*

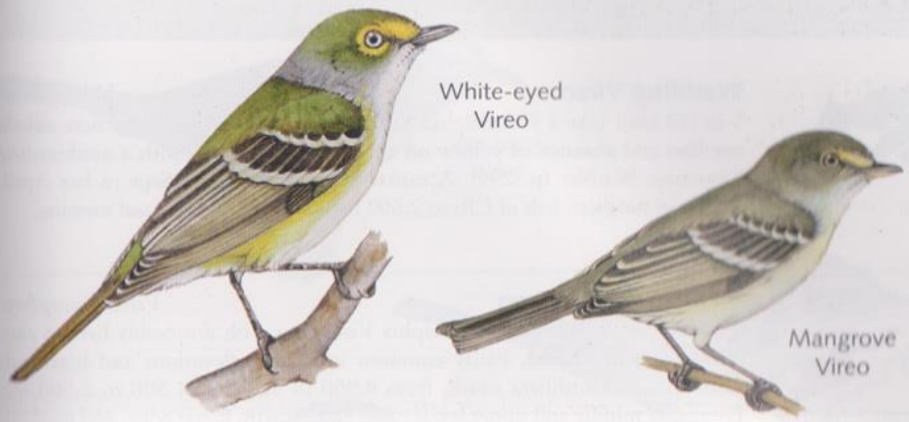
5 in (13 cm). The **bright-yellow spectacles, throat, and breast**, together with **white wing bars**, are a unique combination. A common and widespread migrant, from late Sept to late April; to 5,900 ft (1,800 m). Found in a variety of habitats, but typically in gardens and second growth, and at forest edge; often accompanies mixed flocks. Makes a descending series of harsh, fast notes: *cheh-cheh-cheh-cheh-cheh-cheh*.

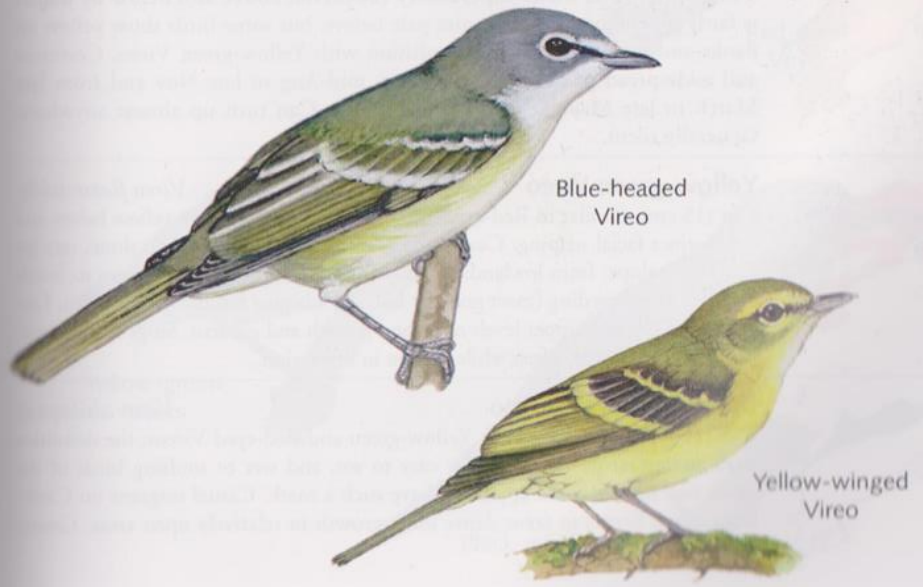
Blue-headed Vireo *Vireo solitarius*

5 in (13 cm). The **white throat and spectacles contrast with the gray-blue head**. A rare migrant, from late Sept to late March. The few records suggest it could show up just about anywhere, though more likely on Pacific slope or in highlands.

Yellow-winged Vireo *Vireo carmioli*

4 in (10 cm). No other vireo or warbler in CR combines **yellow wing bars** with **yellow underparts** (resembles Yellow Tyrannulet [p. 226], but no range overlap). Common in highlands of Central and Talamanca Cordilleras; from 4,900 ft (1,500 m) to timberline. Forages at all levels in mature forest, forest edge, and gardens; often accompanies mixed flocks. Sings a leisurely series of two- and three-note phrases with distinct pauses between each phrase. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**





Warbling Vireo *Vireo gilvus*

5 in (13 cm). Like a Philadelphia Vireo with pale underparts, but note **subtle eye line** and **absence of yellow on throat**. Also compare with a nonbreeding Tennessee Warbler (p. 294). A casual migrant, from late Sept to late April, mostly in northern half of CR; to 2,600 ft (800 m). Makes a nasal mewing.

Brown-capped Vireo *Vireo leucophrys*

5 in (13 cm). Similar to Philadelphia Vireo, but with noticeably **brown cap**; also has **white throat**. Fairly common in middle elevations and highlands from Tilarán Cordillera south; from 4,900 to 8,200 ft (1,500 to 2,500 m). Forages at middle and upper levels of second growth, forest edge, and gardens; often with mixed flocks. Sings a short, lively warble of alternating higher and lower notes.

Philadelphia Vireo *Vireo philadelphicus*

5 in (13 cm). Could be mistaken for a nonbreeding Tennessee Warbler (p. 294), but has thicker bill and is more sluggish. Similar to Brown-capped Vireo, but distinguished by **gray cap** and **yellow throat**. Has more **obvious eye line** than rare Warbling Vireo and, although the amount of yellow on the undersides is variable, always shows some **yellow on the breast and throat**. Fairly common and widespread migrant (though somewhat less common on Caribbean slope), from late Oct to late April; to 7,200 ft (2,200 m). Forages at lower and middle levels of second growth, forest edge, and gardens; often with mixed flocks. Generally silent.

Red-eyed Vireo *Vireo olivaceus*

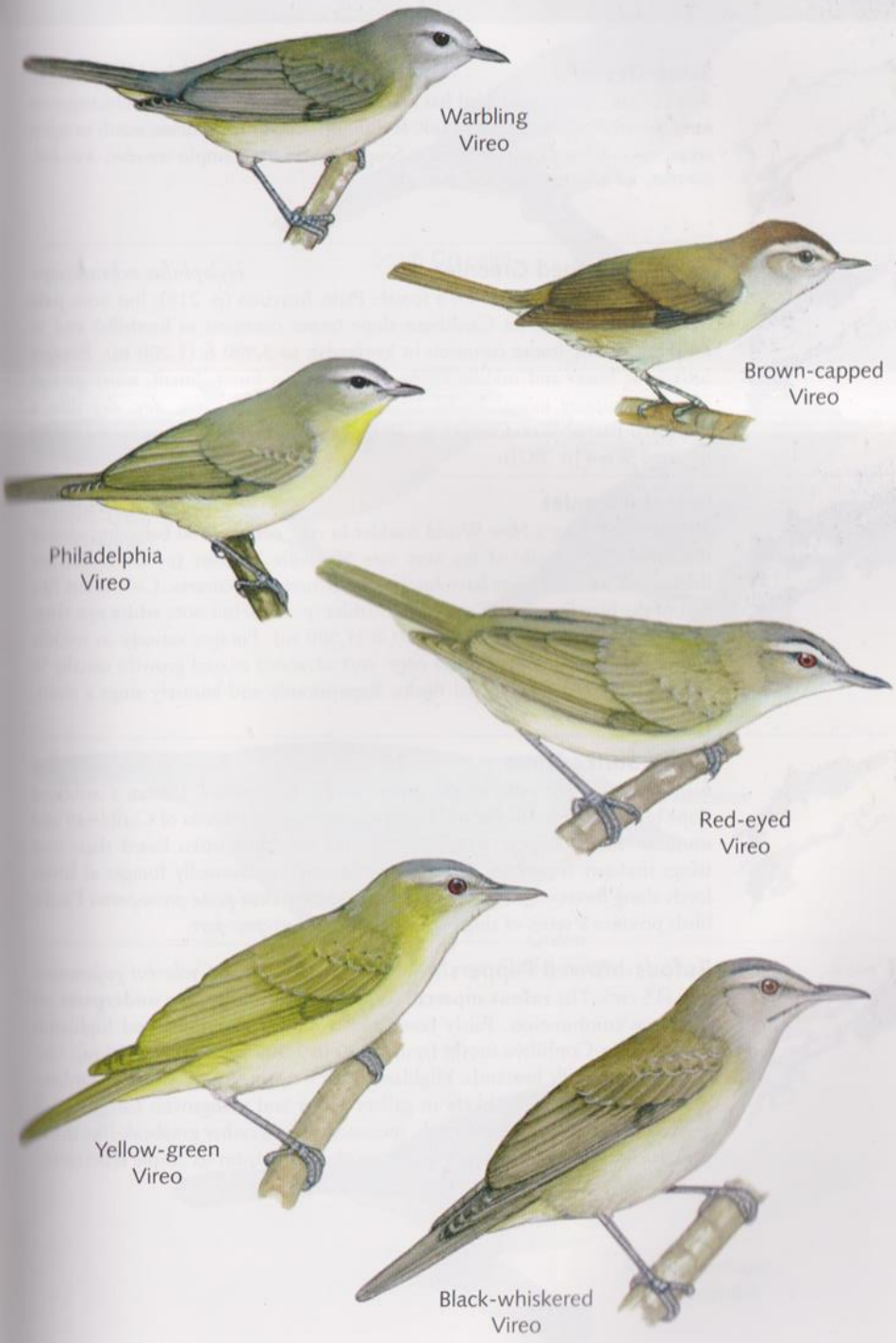
6 in (15 cm). The **white superciliary (bordered above and below by black)** is fairly distinctive. Usually quite pale below, but some birds show yellow on flanks and vent, thus causing confusion with Yellow-green Vireo. Common and widespread passage migrant, from mid-Aug to late Nov and from late March to late May; to 6,600 ft (2,000 m). Can turn up almost anywhere. Generally silent.

Yellow-green Vireo *Vireo flavoviridis*

6 in (15 cm). Similar to Red-eyed Vireo, but with much more yellow below and less distinct facial striping. Common breeding migrant on Pacific slope, rare on Caribbean slope; from lowlands to about 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Migrates to South America after breeding (most gone by late Oct), begins returning in late Jan. Forages at middle and upper levels of second growth and gardens. Sings short simple phrases repetitiously, often while hidden in vegetation.

Black-whiskered Vireo *Vireo altiloquus*

6 in (15 cm). Resembles both Yellow-green and Red-eyed Vireos; the definitive **dark malar stripe** is not always easy to see, and wet or molting birds of the other two species could appear to have such a mark. Casual migrant on Caribbean slope. Seems to favor dense undergrowth in relatively open areas. Generally silent.



Scrub Greenlet *Hylophilus flavipes*

5 in (13 cm). No similar bird has both a **pale iris** and a **pink bill**. Uncommon on southern Pacific slope; to 3,000 ft (900 m). Stays low in dense scrub in open areas; also in bamboo plantations. Sings a sweet and simple *we-cher, we-cher, we-cher, we-cher, we-cher, we cher, wee.*

Tawny-crowned Greenlet *Hylophilus ochraceiceps*

4 in (10 cm). Brings to mind a female Plain Antvireo (p. 218), but note **pale iris**. Fairly common on Caribbean slope (more common in foothills) and in southern Pacific (more common in lowlands); to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Forages actively at lower and middle levels of mature wet forest. Small, noisy groups often accompany mixed flocks. Utters an agitated *doy, doy, doy, doy* (like a Northern Barred-Woodcreeper [p. 200]) and a high, shrill whistle (like a Scaly-breasted Wren [p. 282]).

Lesser Greenlet *Hylophilus decurtatus*

4 in (10 cm). Like a New World warbler in size, pattern, and behavior; closely resembles the juvenile of the very rare Nashville Warbler (p. 294), but has thicker bill and does not have bright-yellow undertail coverts. Coloration like that of the breeding male Tennessee Warbler (p. 294), but note **white eye ring**. Common and widespread; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Forages actively in middle and upper levels of forest, forest edge, and advanced second growth; usually in small groups and with mixed flocks. Repetitiously and leisurely sings a short, warbled phrase: *chi-uree.*

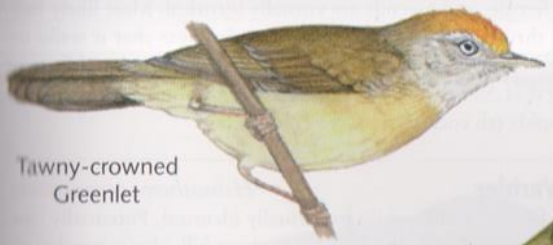
Green Shrike-Vireo *Vireolanius pulchellus*

6 in (15 cm). The only **bright-green** bird with a **yellow throat**. Caribbean slope birds have blue foreheads. Fairly common in wet forests of Caribbean and southern Pacific slopes; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). More often heard than seen (sings tirelessly from high in the forest canopy); occasionally forages at lower levels along forest edge. Caribbean birds whistle a clear *peeta-peeta-peeta*; Pacific birds produce a series of single-syllabled notes: *peer-peer-peer.*

Rufous-browed Peppershrike *Cyclarhis gujanensis*

6 in (15 cm). The **rufous superciliary, gray head**, and **yellow underparts** are a unique combination. Fairly common in middle elevations and highlands from Tilarán Cordillera south; from 2,300 to 7,900 ft (700 to 2,400 m). Uncommon in Pacific lowlands. Highland birds frequent forest edge and gardens, lowland birds are more likely in gallery forest and mangroves; forages at all levels. From a high, hidden perch, incessantly sings rather grosbeak-like musical phrases, periodically switching to another song from its ample repertoire.

Scrub Greenlet



Tawny-crowned Greenlet

Lesser Greenlet

Pacific slope

Green Shrike-Vireo

Rufous-browed Peppershrike

PARULIDAE. A New World family of small, active birds characterized by thin, pointed bills. New World warblers are easily confused with vireos (p. 284), but vireos have heavier bills and are typically more methodic in their movements. Furthermore, vireos—both resident and migrant species—freely vocalize, whereas the migrant warblers seldom utter more than a *chip* note when away from their breeding grounds. More than three quarters of the fifty-three warbler species reported in Costa Rica are North American migrants, many of which present identification challenges. A number of species are very similar, and, to add to the confusion, a given species often shows a range of plumage variations. From about mid-March, many migrants begin to molt into their distinctive breeding plumage. Check for wing bars, streaking on the breast and back, as well as any distinctive facial pattern or coloration.

Ovenbird *Seiurus aurocapilla*

6 in (15 cm). Male, female, and juvenile are virtually identical. Most likely mistaken for a migrant thrush, but has **striped crown**; also note that it walks on forest floor (instead of hopping). Fairly common migrant, from mid-Sept to early May; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Forages on the ground in forest and tall second growth, often holds tail cocked up. Gives a hard *chup*.

Worm-eating Warbler *Helmitheros vermivorum*

5 in (13 cm). Male, female, and juvenile are virtually identical. Potentially confused with Olive Sparrow (p. 336), but note thin, sharp bill; also somewhat resembles Three-striped Warbler (p. 312), but has **buffy underparts**. Uncommon migrant, from late Aug to late April; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Forages on or near ground in undergrowth and in lower levels of forest; often with mixed flocks.

Louisiana Waterthrush *Parkesia motacilla*

6 in (15 cm). Male, female, and juvenile are virtually identical. Very similar to Northern Waterthrush, but note **white throat** and **white superciliary that broadens behind eye**; also has **buffy wash on flanks**. Uncommon winter resident (from late July to mid-April) and passage migrant, mostly at middle elevations, to 8,500 ft (2,600 m); rare passage migrant in lowlands. Terrestrial, favors fast-flowing streams; habitually teeters as it walks or stands. Call similar to that of Northern Waterthrush.

Northern Waterthrush *Parkesia noveboracensis*

6 in (15 cm). Male, female, and juvenile are virtually identical. Very similar to Louisiana Waterthrush, but note **flecking on throat** and **thinner superciliary**. Common migrant, from mid-Aug to mid-May, mostly in lowlands; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Terrestrial, prefers edges of ponds and slow-moving streams, also found on trails; habitually teeters as it walks or stands. Utters a metallic *tsink*.

Buff-rumped Warbler *Myiothlypis fulvicauda*

5 in (13 cm). Resembles Sulphur-rumped and Black-tailed Flycatchers (p. 236), but note the **pale superciliary**. Common in wet lowlands and foothills; to 3,300 ft (1,000 m) on Caribbean slope, and to 4,900 ft (1,500 m) in southern Pacific. Hops and flits along edges of forest streams and on trails and lawns; often attends army-ant swarms; swishes tail from side to side. Sings an accelerating series of loud, piercing notes that can easily be heard above the sound of rushing water.

[The Golden-winged Warbler and Blue-winged Warbler frequently hybridize; the resulting hybrids are classified as either Brewster's Warbler or Lawrence's Warbler. There are only a few records for either hybrid in CR.]

Golden-winged Warbler *Vermivora chrysoptera*

5 in (13 cm). The large **yellow shoulder patch** and **striped facial pattern** (less distinct in female and juvenile but still obvious) readily identify this species. Migrants present from early Sept to late April; fairly common at middle elevations and in highlands (to 8,200 ft [2,500 m]), uncommon in Caribbean lowlands, and rare in Pacific lowlands. Prefers middle levels of forest and forest edge; often accompanies mixed flocks.

Blue-winged Warbler *Vermivora cyanoptera*

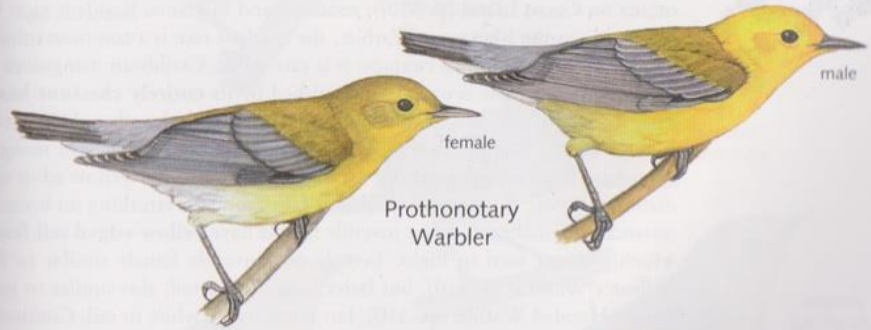
5 in (13 cm). The only **mostly yellow** warbler with a **narrow, dark eye line** and **two white wing bars**. Rare migrant, from mid-Sept to late April, most likely in Caribbean lowlands and middle elevations; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Forages at middle levels of second growth and in gardens.

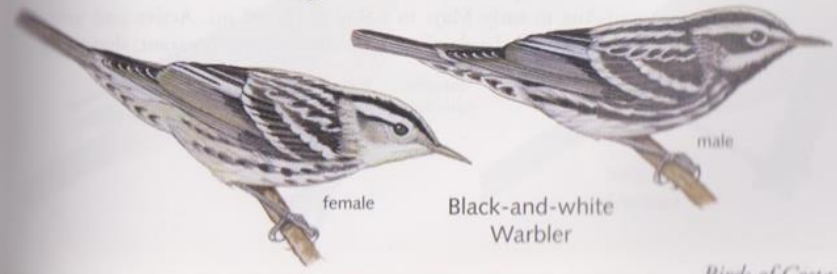
Prothonotary Warbler *Protonotaria citrea*

5 in (13 cm). The combination of **yellow foreparts, gray wings**, and **white posterior underparts** is diagnostic. Female and juvenile are very similar. Fairly common migrant, from mid-Aug to late March, mostly in lowlands; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Forages in lower levels of vegetation, usually near water (especially mangroves).

Black-and-white Warbler *Mniotilta varia*

5 in (13 cm). Boldly striped black-and-white pattern is diagnostic on both adults; juvenile is slightly drabber. Common migrant, from mid-Aug to mid-April, most numerous at middle elevations and in highlands; to 8,200 ft (2,500 m). Forages at middle and lower levels of forest, forest edge, and gardens, often with mixed flocks; creeps on branches and tree trunks.





Tennessee Warbler *Oreothlypis peregrina*

5 in (13 cm). In all plumages, shows **thin eye line, pale superciliary**, and **whitish undertail coverts**. (Note that adult female and nonbreeding male are virtually identical.) Breeding male resembles Lesser Greenlet (p. 288), but note eye ring on latter species. Adult female and nonbreeding male could be confused with Philadelphia and Warbling Vireos (p. 286), but note thin bill and white undertail coverts. Also compare with female Red-legged Honeycreeper (p. 324). Common migrant, from early Sept to early May; to 7,500 ft (2,300 m). Forages at all levels of forest edge and gardens; often in small flocks that feed on flower nectar and insects. Face sometimes tinted orange from pollen.

Nashville Warbler *Oreothlypis ruficapilla*

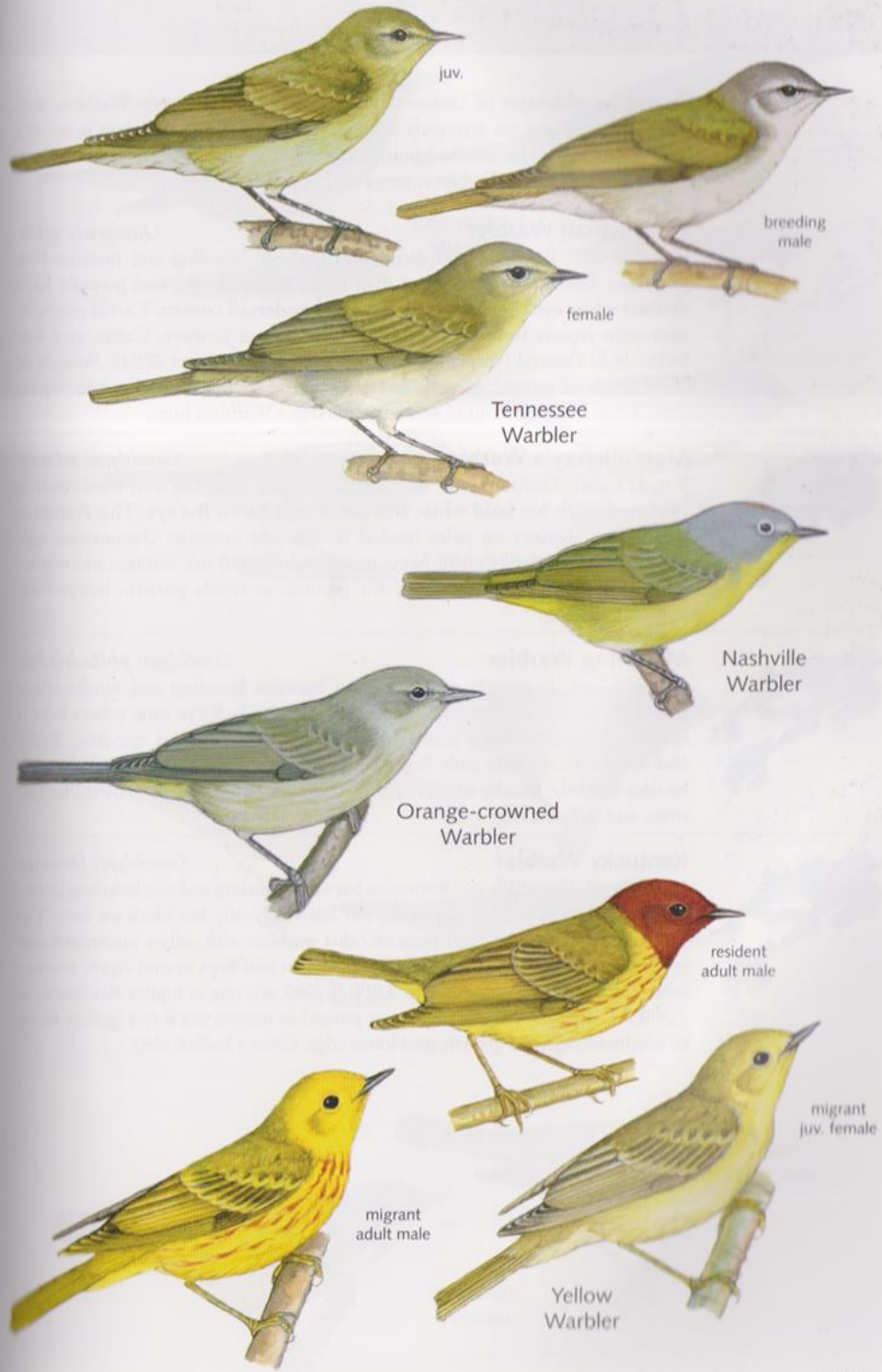
5 in (13 cm). Pattern is similar to that of Lesser Greenlet (p. 288), but has **bright-yellow underparts**; drab juvenile female closely resembles Lesser Greenlet, but has bright-yellow undertail coverts and a thin, pointed bill. She also resembles female and juvenile Mourning, MacGillivray's, and Connecticut Warblers (p. 296), but is essentially arboreal, whereas the latter are mostly terrestrial or forage low in shrubbery. A casual migrant; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m).

Orange-crowned Warbler *Oreothlypis celata*

5 in (13 cm). Similar to Tennessee Warbler in behavior and coloration, but note **yellow undertail coverts** and **blurry streaking on underparts**. Juvenile generally paler. Orange crown is rarely visible; note that Tennessee Warblers with faces tinted orange from pollen are sometimes mistakenly assumed to be of this species. A casual migrant, with only a handful of scattered records. Reported up to 4,900 ft (1,500 m).

Yellow Warbler *Setophaga petechia*

5 in (13 cm). There are two populations in mainland CR (a third population occurs on Cocos Island [p. 370]): residents and migrants. Resident race: Often referred to as the Mangrove Warbler, the resident race is a common inhabitant of Pacific coast mangrove swamps; it is rare in the Caribbean mangroves north of Moín. Adult male is easily distinguished by its **entirely chestnut head**; female has chestnut center of crown; juvenile is rather drab and could be mistaken for a Nashville Warbler, which is a casual migrant and unlikely in mangroves. Migrants: The **rufous streaking on underparts** of bright-yellow adult male is distinctive; note that juvenile male has faint, reduced streaking on breast. The unstreaked female and duller juvenile female have **yellow-edged tail feathers**, which are best seen in flight. Female and juvenile female similar to female Wilson's Warbler (p. 310), but latter has an olive tail; also similar to juvenile female Hooded Warbler (p. 310), but latter shows white in tail. Common migrant, from mid-Aug to early May; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Active and noisy; forages at lower and middle levels of gardens. Emits a near constant, sharp *chip*.



[Respective plumages of Connecticut Warbler, MacGillivray's Warbler, and Mourning Warbler are extremely similar. The key diagnostic feature is the eye ring. Of the three species, the Mourning Warbler is by far the most common in CR; the Connecticut Warbler is very rare.]

Connecticut Warbler *Oporornis agilis*

6 in (15 cm). Essentially no distinction between breeding and nonbreeding plumages. Female has paler head than male. Male, female, and juvenile have **distinct white eye ring** and **long, extended undertail coverts**. Casual migrant, with sight reports from Oct to March from Puerto Jiménez, Cañas, and San Isidro de El General (years uncited), and also Guápiles (Sept 2004). Forages in lower levels of second growth, forest edge, and gardens, usually near water; walks on ground (Mourning and MacGillivray's Warblers hop).

MacGillivray's Warbler *Geothlypis tolmiei*

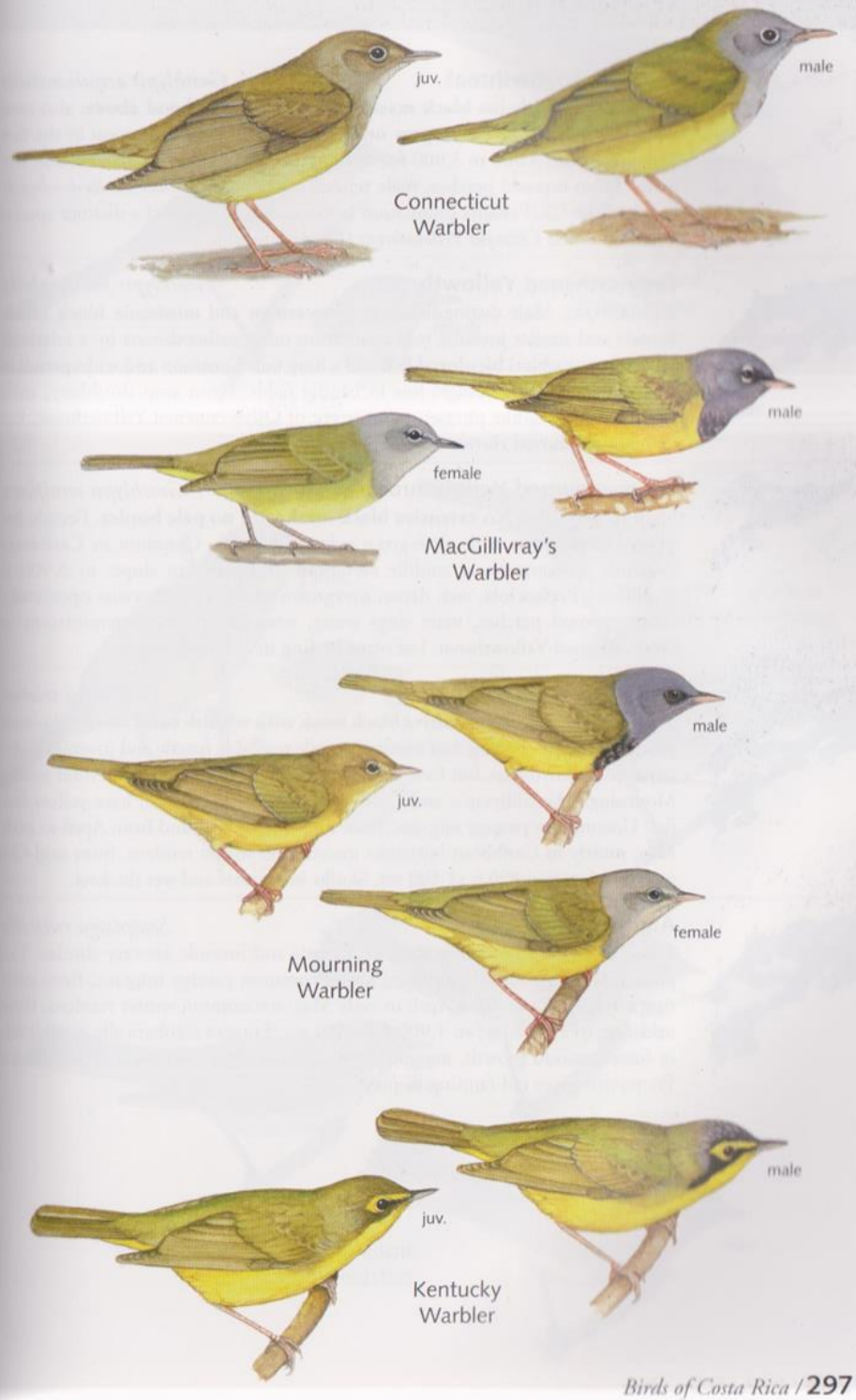
5 in (13 cm). Essentially no distinction between breeding and nonbreeding plumages. Male has **bold white arcs above and below the eye**. This feature is slightly less distinct on paler headed female and juvenile. Uncommon migrant, from mid-Sept to mid-May; to 6,600 ft (2,000 m). Forages inconspicuously, usually within a meter of the ground, in weedy growth, hedgerows, and at forest edge.

Mourning Warbler *Geothlypis philadelphia*

5 in (13 cm). Essentially no distinction between breeding and nonbreeding plumages. Male has no eye ring; some females also lack eye ring, others have a narrow, broken eye ring; juvenile also has a narrow, broken eye ring. Fairly common migrant, from early Sept to mid-May; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Forages inconspicuously, usually within a meter of the ground, in weedy growth, hedgerows, and at forest edge.

Kentucky Warbler *Geothlypis formosa*

5 in (13 cm). Essentially no distinction between breeding and nonbreeding plumages. Female is very similar to male, but has marginally less black on face. The **yellow spectacles** set it apart from all other warblers with yellow underparts and greenish-olive upperparts. Migrants present from mid-Sept to mid-April; uncommon in lowlands and foothills, to 3,000 ft (900 m); rare at higher elevations, to 7,200 ft (2,200 m). Forages on or near ground in mature wet forest (gallery forest in northwest), second growth, and forest edge. Gives a hollow *chup*.



Masked Yellowthroat *Geothlypis aequinoctialis*

5 in (13 cm). Male has **black mask with grayish-blue band above**; also note **yellow belly**. Female shows **gray on sides of head**. Fairly common in the San Vito area; from 3,000 to 3,900 ft (900 to 1,200 m). Found in marshes and wet fields. From exposed perches, male repeats sweet phrases: *twee-lee-lee-lee-leetch-wee-lee*. The CR/Panama population is sometimes considered a distinct species and then called *Chiriquí Yellowthroat* (*G. chiriquensis*).

Gray-crowned Yellowthroat *Geothlypis poliocephala*

5 in (13 cm). Male distinguished by **gray crown** and **miniscule black mask**. Female and similar juvenile told apart from other yellowthroats by a relatively thick (for a warbler) **bicolored bill** and a long tail. Common and widespread; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Forages low in brushy fields. From atop shrubbery, male sings sweet, wren-like phrases, reminiscent of Olive-crowned Yellowthroat, but without the slurred *chrrree* note at the end.

Olive-crowned Yellowthroat *Geothlypis semiflava*

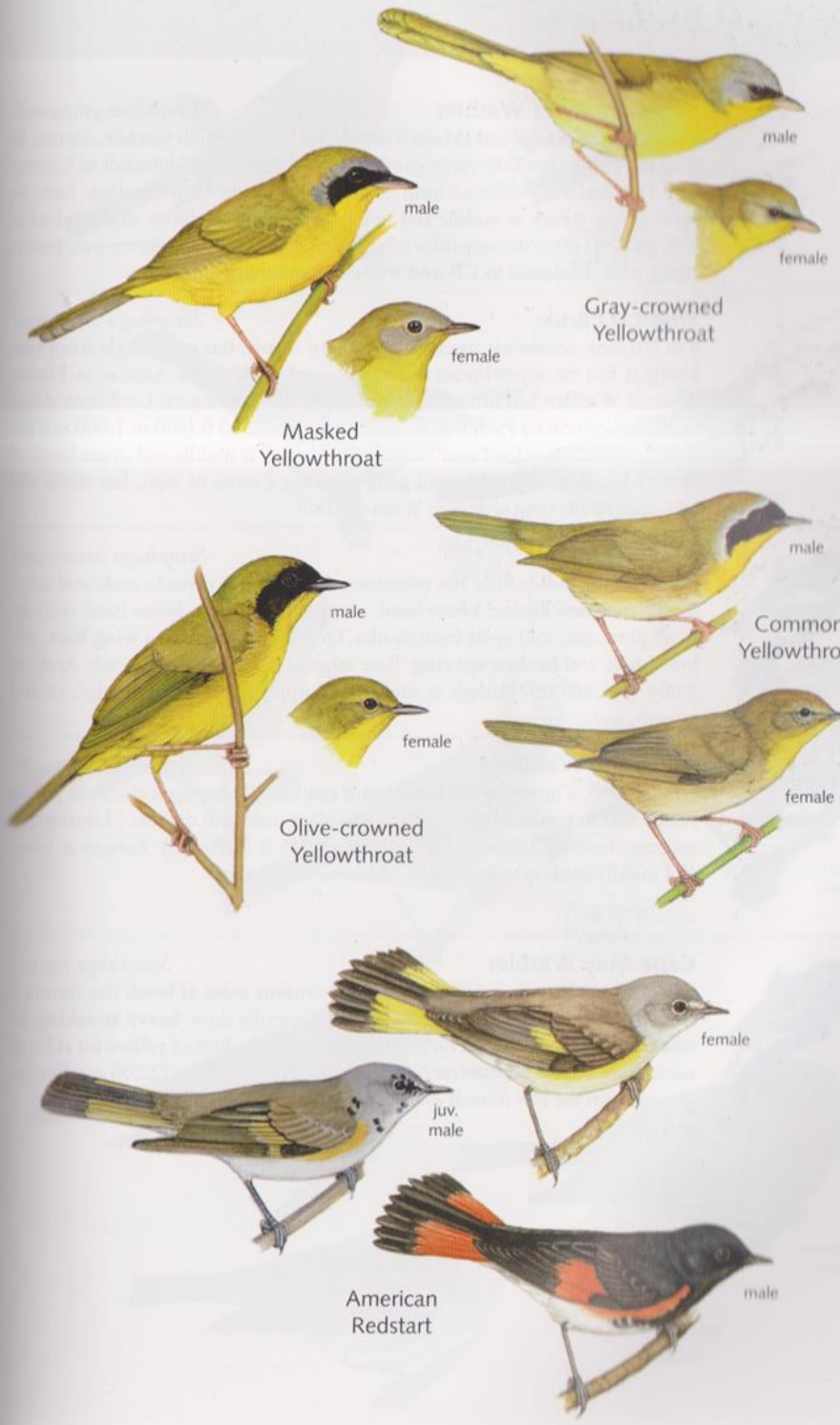
5 in (13 cm). Male has **extensive black mask with no pale border**. Female has **yellow underparts** with olive-green sides and flanks. Common in Caribbean lowlands, uncommon at middle elevations of Caribbean slope; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Prefers low, wet, dense, overgrown sections of otherwise open areas. From exposed perches, male sings sweet, wren-like phrases—reminiscent of Gray-crowned Yellowthroat, but often ending in a slurred *chrrree*.

Common Yellowthroat *Geothlypis trichas*

5 in (13 cm). Male has **extensive black mask with whitish band above**; also note **pale buffy belly**. Female and similar juvenile resemble female and juvenile Gray-crowned Yellowthroat, but have thin, dark bill and shorter tail; somewhat similar Mourning, MacGillivray's, and Connecticut Warblers (p. 296) have yellow bellies. Uncommon passage migrant, from mid-Oct to Nov and from April to early May, mostly in Caribbean lowlands; uncommon winter resident, from mid-Oct to early May, to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Skulks in marshes and wet thickets.

American Redstart *Setophaga ruticilla*

5 in (13 cm). Adult male is striking. Female and juvenile are very similar. Tail pattern is unique in all plumages. Fairly common passage migrant, from early Aug to late Oct and from April to early May; uncommon winter resident, from mid-Aug to early May; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Forages acrobatically at all levels in forest, second growth, mangroves, and forest edge; often with mixed flocks. Frequently gives tail-fanning display.



Flame-throated Warbler *Oreothlypis gutturalis*

5 in (13 cm). **Orange-red throat** is distinctive, even on drab juvenile. Similar to Tropical Parula, but little range overlap. Fairly common in highlands of Central and Talamanca Cordilleras; from 5,200 ft (1,600 m) to timberline. Pairs or small groups forage at middle and upper levels of forest, forest edge, and adjacent gardens; often accompanies mixed flocks. Gives a high, drawn-out, buzzy, arcing note. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Tropical Parula *Setophaga pitiayumi*

4 in (10 cm). Somewhat similar to Northern Parula, but note **single wing bar**, orangish tint to upper breast and throat, and **dark mask**. Similar to Flame-throated Warbler, but little range overlap. Fairly common on Caribbean slope, fairly uncommon on Pacific slope; from 2,000 to 5,900 ft (600 to 1,800 m); has been reported at sea level near Carara NP. Forages at middle and upper levels of forest edge, second growth, and gardens. Sings a series of high, fast notes and trills that recalls song of House Wren (p. 280).

Northern Parula *Setophaga americana*

4 in (10 cm). Adult male has prominent breast band; juvenile male and adult female show less distinct breast band; juvenile female lacks breast band entirely. In all plumages, told apart from similar Tropical Parula by **two wing bars**, yellow throat, and **broken eye ring**. Rare migrant, from late Oct to early April; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Forages at middle and upper levels of forest edge, second growth, and gardens.

Magnolia Warbler *Setophaga magnolia*

5 in (13 cm). The **white tail band** sets it apart in all plumages; also note **yellow rump**. (Adult female is very similar to breeding male, but drabber.) Uncommon migrant, from mid-Sept to late April; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Forages at lower and middle levels in gallery forest, thickets, and gardens.

Cape May Warbler *Setophaga tigrina*

5 in (13 cm). Breeding male has distinctive **rufous sides of head**; this feature is reduced on nonbreeding male. Female and juvenile show **heavy streaking on underparts** (rather blurred on juvenile female) and a hint of **yellow on sides of neck**. Rare migrant, from late Nov to mid-May; to 7,200 ft (2,200 m). Extrapolating from the few records available, could turn up almost anywhere.

Black-throated Blue Warbler *Setophaga caerulescens*

5 in (13 cm). Essentially no distinction between breeding and nonbreeding plumages. Adult male and similarly plumaged juvenile male are distinctive. Adult female and juvenile female are quite drab; note narrow white superciliary, **arc below eye**, and **white spot on wing** (absent in some juvenile females); compare with juvenile Bananaquit (p. 324). Casual migrant, from Oct to March, mostly at middle elevations; from 1,600 to 4,600 ft (500 to 1,400 m). Forages at middle levels of forest and forest edge.

Cerulean Warbler *Setophaga cerulea*

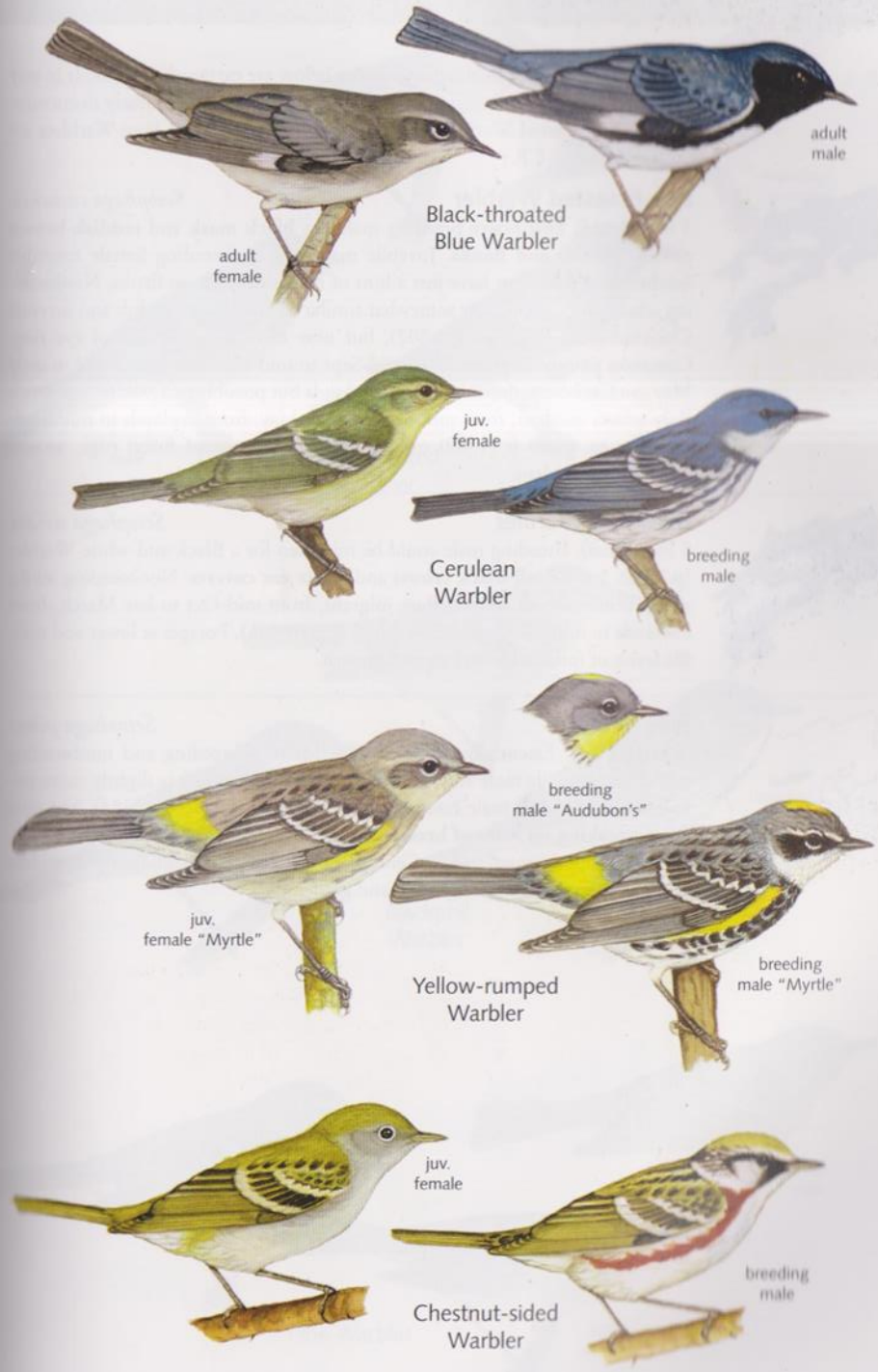
5 in (13 cm). Breeding male has distinctive **blue upperparts**. All other plumages are very similar to juvenile female, which has **broad, pale superciliary** and distinctive **blue-green upperparts**. Uncommon passage migrant, from late Aug to early Nov and from late March to late April, mostly on Caribbean slope and in Central Valley; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Forages actively at middle and upper levels of forest, forest edge, and advanced second growth.

Yellow-rumped Warbler *Setophaga coronata*

5 in (13 cm). Identified in any plumage by **yellow on rump and sides of breast** (juvenile female has very faint yellow on sides of breast); also note pale underparts with dark streaking. Breeding male has blue-gray upperparts; all other plumages have brownish upperparts. There are two races of Yellow-rumped Warbler; in CR, the white-throated "Myrtle" is much more likely than the yellow-throated "Audubon's." Widespread; usually an uncommon migrant, though in some years irruptive; from mid-Sept to late March; to 5,900 ft (1,800 m). Forages on or near ground in fairly open areas; often in small groups.

Chestnut-sided Warbler *Setophaga pensylvanica*

5 in (13 cm). Breeding male is distinctive; breeding female is very similar, but with reduced chestnut on flanks and reduced facial markings. Nonbreeding adults and juvenile male resemble juvenile female but have some chestnut on flanks. Nonbreeding adults and juveniles often mistaken for a gnatcatcher (p. 274)—due in part to habit of cocking rather long tail up at an angle—but note **eye ring** and **wing bars**; could also be mistaken for nonbreeding adult or juvenile Bay-breasted Warbler (p. 304), but note plain-gray face and white eye ring. Common migrant (though scarce in northern Pacific), from early Sept to mid-May; to 7,200 ft (2,200 m). Forages at all levels of forest edge, second growth, and gardens; often with mixed flocks. Gives a sharp *chip*.



[The juvenile females of the three species below are extremely similar. It is very difficult to distinguish between them in the field. You are most likely to encounter the Bay-breasted Warbler, however, as the Blackpoll and Pine Warblers are both very rare in CR.]

Bay-breasted Warbler *Setophaga castanea*

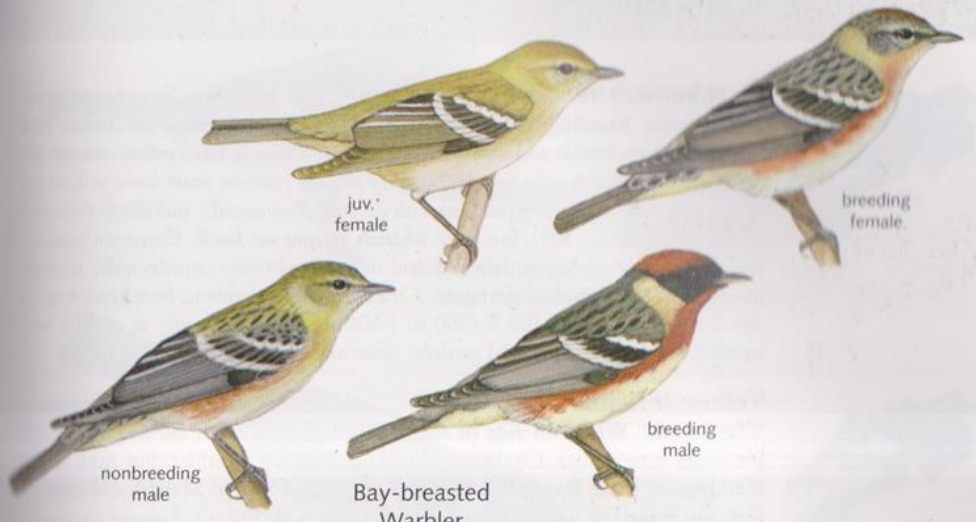
5 in (13 cm). Distinctive breeding male has **black mask** and **reddish-brown crown, throat, and flanks**. Juvenile male and nonbreeding female resemble nonbreeding male, but have just a hint of reddish-brown on flanks. Nonbreeding adults and juveniles are somewhat similar to nonbreeding adult and juvenile Chestnut-sided Warblers (p. 302), but note olive face and lack of eye ring. Common passage migrant, from mid-Sept to mid-Nov and from April to early May, on Caribbean slope, mostly in lowlands but possible to 5,900 ft (1,800 m). Rare winter resident, from mid-Sept to early May, from lowlands to middle elevations; to 4,600 ft (1,400 m). Forages at all levels of forest edge, second growth, and gardens.

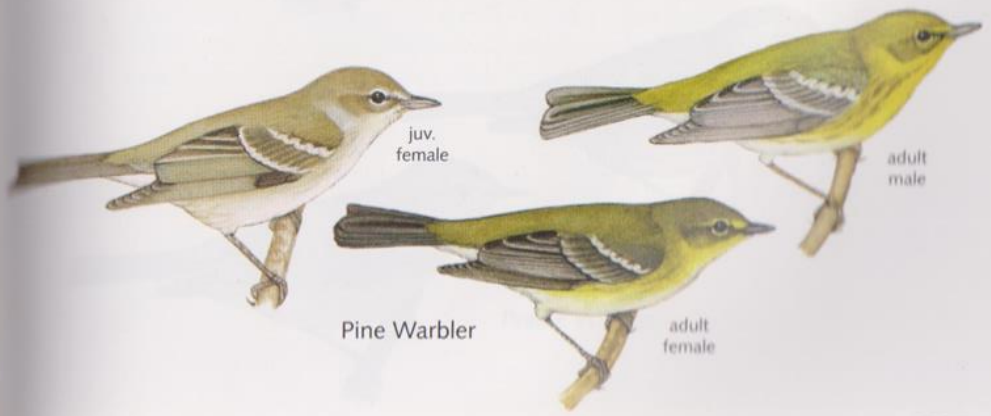
Blackpoll Warbler *Setophaga striata*

5 in (13 cm). Breeding male could be mistaken for a Black-and-white Warbler (p. 292), but has **all-black crown** and **white ear coverts**. Nonbreeding adults and juveniles are all similar. Rare migrant, from mid-Oct to late March, from lowlands to middle elevations; to 4,600 ft (1,400 m). Forages at lower and middle levels of forest edge and second growth.

Pine Warbler *Setophaga pinus*

5 in (13 cm). Essentially no distinction between breeding and nonbreeding plumages. Juvenile male very similar to adult female, but has slightly more yellow on belly. Adult male resembles Yellow-throated Vireo (p. 284), but note **faint streaking on sides of breast**. Casual migrant, from late Aug to mid-Nov, along Caribbean coast and in Central Valley. Forages methodically at middle and upper levels of second growth and gardens.





Blackburnian Warbler *Setophaga fusca*

5 in (13 cm). Breeding male is distinguished by **intense orange on throat and head**. Breeding female and nonbreeding male and female have yellow-orange on throat and head. Juvenile female and very similar juvenile male have yellow on throat and head; might be confused with juvenile Townsend's and Black-throated Green Warblers (p. 308), but note **whitish stripes on back**. Common passage migrant, from mid-Aug to late Oct and in April, virtually countrywide, though most numerous at middle elevations. Common winter resident, from mid-Aug to April; from 1,600 to 5,200 ft (500 to 1,600 m). Forages mostly at middle and upper levels of forest edge and gardens; often accompanies mixed flocks.

Yellow-throated Warbler *Setophaga dominica*

5 in (13 cm). **White on side of neck** and **plain gray back** are diagnostic. All plumages very similar. Could suggest a Blackburnian Warbler, but note white markings on head. Rare winter resident (from mid-Aug to March) and passage migrant; mostly at middle elevations; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Forages methodically at lower and middle levels of second growth and gardens; often found in pine trees.

Palm Warbler *Setophaga palmarum*

5 in (13 cm). The **chestnut cap** is distinctive in breeding plumage; in all plumages, note **yellow undertail coverts**. Juveniles are virtually identical to nonbreeding adults. Rare migrant, from mid-Oct to April; to 2,600 ft (800 m). Forages on ground in open areas, usually near water; pumps tail constantly.

Prairie Warbler *Setophaga discolor*

5 in (13 cm). In breeding male, **black facial markings, black streaking on flanks**, and **rufous streaks on back** are diagnostic. These features are reduced, to varying degrees, in other plumages; in juvenile female, note that the white above and below the eye is bordered by gray. Casual migrant, from late Aug to March. Forages at lower and middle levels of forest edge and second growth; bobs tail continually.

Townsend's Warbler *Setophaga townsendi*

5 in (13 cm). Breeding male has black chin and throat; all other plumages show less black (to varying degrees); juvenile female has no black on chin and throat. All plumages similar to respective plumages of Black-throated Green Warbler, but note **yellow on lower breast, dark ear coverts**, and **streaking on back** (absent in juvenile female). Also compare with Blackburnian Warbler (p. 306). Rare migrant, from Sept to April, at middle elevations and in highlands; from 4,300 to 10,200 ft (1,300 to 3,100 m). Forages in middle and upper levels of forest edge, second growth, and gardens.

Hermit Warbler *Setophaga occidentalis*

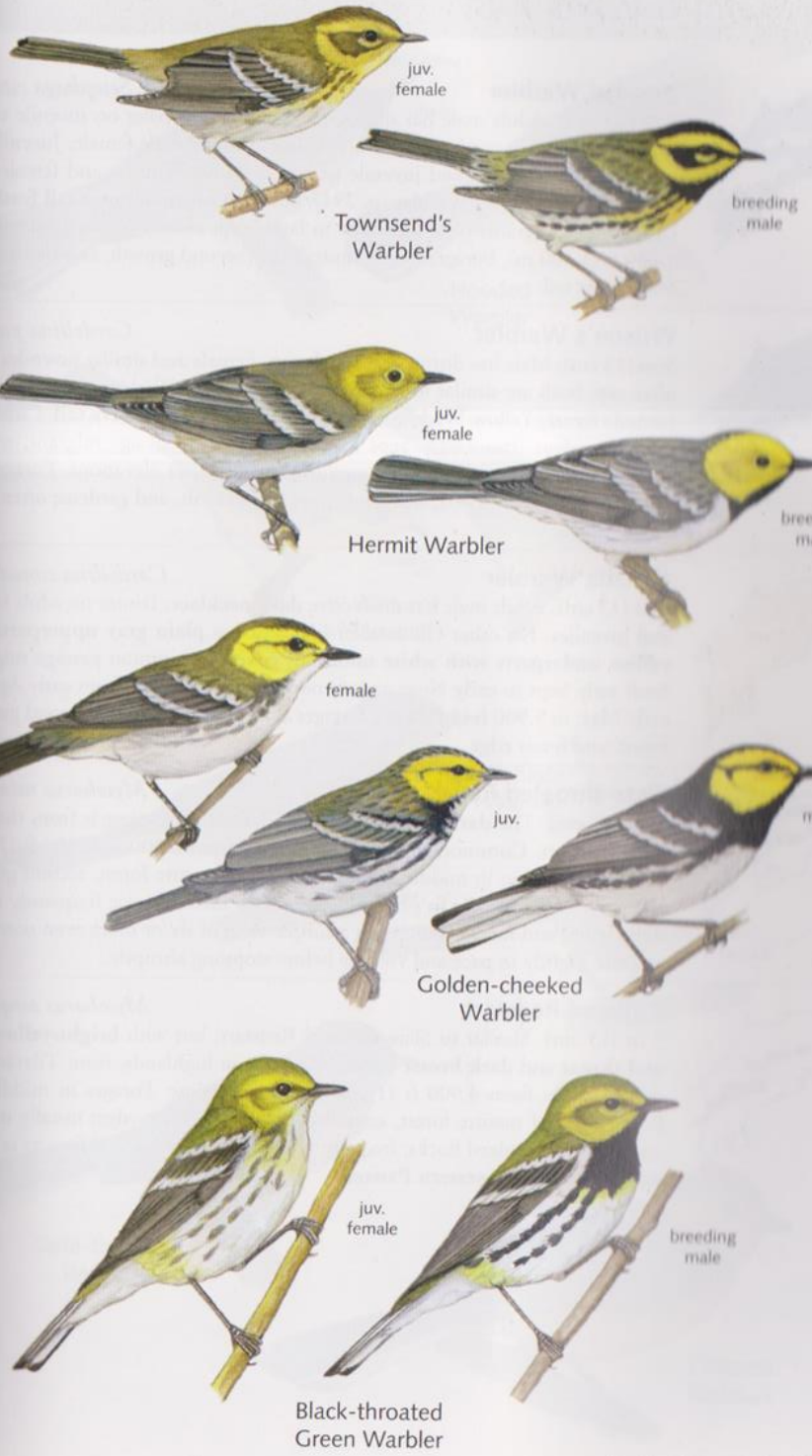
5 in (13 cm). Breeding male has **all-yellow head** with black chin and throat. Other plumages show less black on chin and throat (none on juvenile female) and have vague olive color on crown and ear coverts. Rare migrant, from mid-Sept to March, at middle elevations; from 2,600 to 5,900 ft (800 to 1,800 m). Forages principally in introduced conifers.

Golden-cheeked Warbler *Setophaga chrysoparia*

5 in (13 cm). Told apart from Townsend's, Black-throated Green, and Hermit Warblers by **narrow, dark eye line**; also note **absence of yellow on underparts**. There are four records of females: in hills between San Ramón and Palmares de Alajuela (Sept 2002), near Montaña Azul de Heredia (April 2003), above San Rafael de Oreamuno de Cartago (Dec 2004), and at El Cedral (April 2007). A male was seen above Platanillo, southeast of Turrialba (Oct 2005). Two of the sightings were in agricultural areas with scattered trees, while the other two sightings were in forested areas. All sightings have been between 4,900 and 6,100 ft (1,500 and 1,850 m). This casual migrant was previously known to winter only as far south as Nicaragua.

Black-throated Green Warbler *Setophaga virens*

5 in (13 cm). Breeding male has striking black chin, throat, and upper breast; all other plumages show less black (to varying degrees); juvenile has no black on chin, throat, and upper breast. All plumages similar to respective plumages of Townsend's Warbler, but note **mostly whitish underparts, olive ear coverts**, and **unstreaked back**. Similar to Blackburnian Warbler (p. 306), but that species shows whitish stripes on back. Common migrant, from Oct to mid-April, at middle elevations and in highlands; from 2,600 to 10,200 ft (800 to 3,100 m). Forages in middle and upper levels of forest, forest edge, and gardens.



Hooded Warbler *Setophaga citrina*

5 in (13 cm). Adult male has diagnostic **black hood**; paler on juvenile male. Adult female has a much reduced hood; absent on juvenile female. Juvenile female similar to female and juvenile female Wilson's Warbler and female and juvenile female Yellow Warbler (p. 294), but note **white in outer tail feathers**. Uncommon migrant, from late Sept to late April, mostly in wet lowlands; to 4,600 ft (1,400 m). Forages low in underbrush, second growth, and forest edge; often flicks tail.

Wilson's Warbler *Cardellina pusilla*

5 in (13 cm). Male has distinctive **black cap**. Female and similar juveniles have olive cap; both are similar to juvenile female Hooded Warbler and female and juvenile female Yellow Warbler (p. 294), but note **entirely olive tail**. Common winter resident (from early Sept to early May) and passage migrant, mostly above 2,600 ft (800 m); rare passage migrant at lower elevations. Forages actively at all levels in forest, forest edge, second growth, and gardens; often with mixed flocks.

Canada Warbler *Cardellina canadensis*

5 in (13 cm). Adult male has distinctive **dark necklace**; fainter on adult female and juveniles. No other CR warbler-like bird has **plain gray upperparts** and **yellow underparts with white undertail coverts**. Common passage migrant, from early Sept to early Nov; uncommon passage migrant, from early April to early May; to 5,900 ft (1,800 m). Forages at all levels in gardens, second growth, forest, and forest edge.

Slate-throated Redstart *Myioborus miniatus*

5 in (13 cm). The **dark face and throat** readily differentiate it from the Collared Redstart. Common at middle elevations; from 2,300 to 6,900 ft (700 to 2,100 m). Forages in middle and lower levels of mature forest, second growth, and forest edge; usually in pairs and often with mixed flocks; frequently makes short sallies and fans its tail. Sings a simple song of six or more even notes that increase slightly in pace and volume before stopping abruptly.

Collared Redstart *Myioborus torquatus*

5 in (13 cm). Similar to Slate-throated Redstart, but with **bright-yellow face and throat** and **dark breast band**. Common in highlands, from Tilarán Cordillera south; from 4,900 ft (1,500 m) to timberline. Forages in middle and lower levels of mature forest, second growth, and forest edge; usually in pairs and often with mixed flocks; frequently makes short sallies and fans its tail. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Rufous-capped Warbler *Basileuterus rufifrons*

5 in (13 cm). No other CR warbler combines **rufous on the head** with **plain-yellow underparts**. Common in northern Pacific and in Central Valley, east to Turrialba; to 6,600 ft (2,000 m). Also common in intermontane valleys of southern Pacific; from 2,000 to 5,200 ft (600 to 1,600 m). Forages in lower levels of woodlands, second growth, forest edge, and shaded coffee plantations; typically holds tail cocked upwards. Sings a spritely jumble of accelerating thin, high notes (similar to song of Black-cheeked Warbler).

Black-cheeked Warbler *Basileuterus melanogenys*

5 in (13 cm). The **rufous crown** and **white superciliary** are diagnostic; also note **grayish breast**. Fairly common in highlands of Central and Talamanca Cordilleras; from 5,200 ft (1,600 m) to above timberline. Forages actively at lower levels of highland forest and at forest edge; usually two or more birds are present (often with mixed flocks). Song similar to song of Rufous-capped Warbler, but thinner. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Golden-crowned Warbler *Basileuterus culicivorus*

5 in (13 cm). The combination of a **yellow-orange crown stripe (bordered by black)** and **yellow underparts** is distinctive. Fairly common in foothills and middle elevations; from 2,000 to 4,900 ft (600 to 1,500 m), but up to 7,200 ft (2,200 m) in southern Pacific. Forages actively in lower and middle levels of humid and wet forest and second growth; usually two or more birds are present (often with mixed flocks). Makes dry, rattling wren-like sounds when foraging; whistles a sweet five-note phrase, the first three notes on the same pitch, the fourth lower, and the fifth sliding up in a somewhat questioning tone.

Three-striped Warbler *Basileuterus tristriatus*

5 in (13 cm). Head pattern somewhat resembles Golden-crowned Warbler and Worm-eating Warbler (p. 290), but note **pale-yellow underparts** and **blackish ear coverts**. Common at middle elevations, from Tilarán Cordillera south; from 3,300 to 7,200 ft (1,000 to 2,200 m). Small groups forage actively in lower levels of mature wet forest and advanced second growth, where, together with Common Chlorospingus (p. 340), they are often the core species within mixed flocks. Produces a rapid, high-pitched twittering.

Wrenthrush *Zeledonia coronata*

5 in (13 cm). A somber, rotund, short-tailed bird with a distinctive **golden-russet crown**. Fairly common in highlands; from 4,900 ft (1,500 m) to above timberline. Stays on or near the ground in dense undergrowth of mature wet forests and paramo. Hard to see; presence best revealed by thin, penetrating call (*tseee!*) or high-pitched song (*tsee-te-dee*). **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Yellow-breasted Chat *Icteria virens*

7 in (18 cm). Male, female, and juvenile are virtually identical. No other plain, olive-backed bird combines **white spectacles** and **yellow throat and breast**. Rare migrant, from late Sept to late April; to 4,600 ft (1,400 m). Prefers concealment of brushy tangles in open areas and along forest edge. Gives a deep, harsh *chewt*.

THRAUPIDAE. Genetic research has recently brought great changes to this family. Several genera have been moved to Cardinalidae (p. 342), while the saltators (and others) have been moved from that family into this one. Likewise, numerous genera have been moved from Emberizidae (p. 334) into this family, and, in turn, the genus *Chlorospingus* has been moved from this family into that one. The resulting mix does not allow for a succinct summary of what makes a bird a tanager. Adding to the confusion is the fact that most common names have not been changed, so there are now fairly large groups of birds called *tanagers* in two different families.

Gray-headed Tanager — *Eucometis penicillata*

7 in (18 cm). Size, color pattern, upright stance, and hint of a crest could suggest a flycatcher. However, no CR flycatcher, or other tanager, displays such contrast between the **all-gray head** and **bright-yellow underparts**. Fairly common in humid lowlands and foothills of Pacific slope, to 3,900 ft (1,200 m); uncommon in northern Pacific lowlands and Caño Negro region. Forages in understory of forest and second growth; regularly accompanies army-ant swarms, also follows troops of White-faced Capuchin Monkeys. Most common vocalizations are a dry sputtering or high-pitched squeaky notes.

White-shouldered Tanager — *Tachyphonus luctuosus*

5 in (13 cm). The male's **white shoulder patch** is an obvious field mark (male White-lined Tanager's white shoulder patch is barely visible when perched). Female distinguished from female Black-and-yellow Tanager (p. 320) by thicker, **bicolored bill** and paler throat. Females of southern Pacific race have gray head; females of Caribbean race have olive-green head. Fairly common in wet lowlands and foothills; to 3,300 ft (1,000 m). Pairs or small groups typically accompany other species foraging in lower and middle levels of forest and advanced second growth. Calls with weak sibilant notes.

Tawny-crested Tanager — *Tachyphonus delatrii*

6 in (15 cm). The male's **bright tawny-orange crest feathers** are conspicuous. Nondescript, brown female best identified by the company she keeps—she often travels in flocks of a dozen or more individuals, including distinctive males. Female distinguished from Northern Schiffornis (p. 254) by larger bill. Common in Caribbean foothills, from 1,000 to 2,600 ft (300 to 800 m); uncommon from 2,600 to 3,900 ft (800 to 1,200 m); also uncommon in Caribbean lowlands. Moves through understory and lower canopy of mature wet forest in noisy, active flocks that are often joined by other species, especially Carmiol's Tanagers (p. 348). Call notes are sibilant and squeaky.

White-lined Tanager — *Tachyphonus rufus*

7 in (18 cm). Often travels in pairs; since neither male nor female is particularly distinct, the best key to identification is often their mere co-presence. In flight, the male flashes a bold white wing patch (normally obscured when perched). The bill shape distinguishes the rufous female from other similarly colored species. Fairly common in Caribbean lowlands and foothills (to 1,400 m [4,600 ft] in eastern Central Valley); recently expanding from Panama into southern Pacific. Forages in open areas with brushy habitat. Not very vocal, makes a sweet *chew-wE, chewwE...*, the last part upwardly inflected.

White-throated Shrike-Tanager *Lanio leucothorax*

8 in (20 cm). The **fierce-looking bill** should distinguish the brightly colored male from all similarly colored orioles (see species on p. 358); it is also the best field mark on the brownish female. Male of Caribbean race has yellow rump and undertail coverts; male of Pacific race has black rump and undertail coverts. Both races uncommon. Caribbean race generally in foothills, to 3,000 ft (900 m); Pacific race occurs in southern Pacific lowlands. Forages at middle levels of mature wet forest; encountered with mixed flocks. Produces a variety of vocalizations; one of the more common calls is a two-note repetition (*chit-chew, chit-chew...*), with the first note slightly higher than the second. **Ranges from eastern Honduras to Panama.**

Passerini's Tanager *Ramphocelus passerinii*

6 in (15 cm). Male is virtually identical to male Cherrie's Tanager; females are the key to distinguishing between these species (as is geographic location). Female Passerini's is drabber than female Cherrie's and lacks orange breast and rump. The **thick, light-blue bill with a dark tip** is a trademark of both sexes. A common and conspicuous resident of Caribbean lowlands and foothills; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Numerous birds are generally found together staying low in open areas with ample brush. Calls are varied and frequently given, with a sharp *tsip!* often heard.

Cherrie's Tanager *Ramphocelus costaricensis*

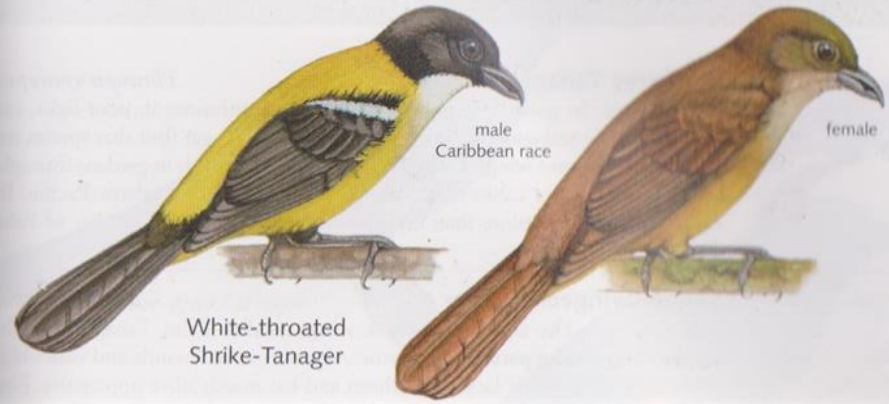
6 in (15 cm). Male is virtually identical to male Passerini's Tanager; female differentiated by **bright-orange breast and rump** (no range overlap). Common in southern Pacific lowlands and foothills; to 5,900 ft (1,800 m). Found in disturbed habitat with thickets and shrubs. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Crimson-collared Tanager *Ramphocelus sanguinolentus*

7 in (18 cm). Not readily confused. Fairly common throughout Caribbean lowlands and foothills; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Individuals or pairs typically forage a few meters above the ground (slightly higher than Passerini's Tanager) in disturbed habitats. Song is a series of slow-paced, sibilant notes.

Blue-and-gold Tanager *Bangsia arcaei*

6 in (15 cm). Suggests a male euphonia (see species on p. 366), but lacks yellow or tawny on crown and has a **dark-red eye**. Uncommon in Caribbean foothills, from Miravalles Volcano to Turrialba Volcano; from 1,300 to 3,900 ft (400 to 1,200 m). Forages mostly in midcanopy of wet forest, often with mixed flocks. **Endemic to CR and Panama.**



Blue-gray Tanager *Thraupis episcopus*

6 in (15 cm). In good light, there should be no confusion; in poor light, can look quite gray and could be mistaken for a Palm Tanager (but that species has an obvious two-tone wing). One of the most common birds in gardens throughout the country, to 7,200 ft (2,200 m); uncommon in northern Pacific. Its simple song is little more than even-pitched squeaks (similar to that of Palm Tanager).

Yellow-winged Tanager *Thraupis abbas*

7 in (18 cm). The contrasting black wings recall a Palm Tanager, but the **bright-yellow wing patch** is diagnostic. Also note scaled mantle and violet-blue sheen to head. Juvenile lacks head sheen and has mostly olive upperparts. First reported in Los Chiles (Dec 2009); has also been found in Caño Negro and Tenorio Volcano NP. Like its congeners, it is a bird of open habitats and gardens, and visits fruit feeders. Gives a high-pitched, sputtering trill lasting from one to three seconds.

Palm Tanager *Thraupis palmarum*

6 in (15 cm). The **black flight feathers** contrast with the otherwise **grayish-olive plumage**. (Compare with Plain-colored Tanager and Sulphur-rumped Tanager). Less numerous than the similar Blue-gray Tanager. Common in gardens below about 5,900 ft (1,800 m); uncommon in the Central Valley and rare in northern Pacific. Song similar to that of Blue-gray Tanager, but more rapid.

Sulphur-rumped Tanager *Heterospingus rubrifrons*

6 in (15 cm). The **white tufts at sides of breast** are conspicuous; the **yellow rump** is difficult to see if the bird is overhead. Darker gray than either Plain-colored or Palm Tanagers. A rare resident of southern Caribbean lowlands and foothills; to 2,300 ft (700 m). Forages in midcanopy of forest and forest edge with mixed flocks. Makes high, buzzy notes. **Endemic to CR and Panama.**

Plain-colored Tanager *Tangara inornata*

5 in (13 cm). Resembles larger Palm Tanager, but without any trace of olive on head; generally keeps violet shoulder patch concealed. Also compare with Sulphur-rumped Tanager. Uncommon in Caribbean lowlands, south from the Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí area. Small groups forage at forest edge and in gardens. Rather nondescript vocalizations, as with most members of this genus. **Ranges from CR to northern Colombia.**

Blue-gray Tanager

Yellow-winged Tanager

Palm Tanager

Sulphur-rumped Tanager

Plain-colored Tanager

Black-and-yellow Tanager *Chrysothlypis chrysomelas*

5 in (13 cm). Color pattern of the male is diagnostic, although the **slender bill** and overall slim proportions suggest a warbler rather than a tanager. The female is much more difficult to identify if not in the presence of a male; the somewhat similar female White-shouldered Tanager (p. 314) has a thicker, bicolored bill and a paler throat; distinguished from all similar-looking warblers by **whitish abdomen**. Fairly common in Caribbean foothills and middle elevations; from 1,300 to 3,900 ft (400 to 1,200 m). Forages with flocks in forest canopy and forest edge. **Endemic to CR and Panama.**

Silver-throated Tanager *Tangara icterocephala*

5 in (13 cm). Silvery-white throat is not as immediately obvious as the **bright-yellow head**; also note the **black malar stripe** and **black streaking on the back**. Female and juvenile have the same overall pattern as the male, but are duller. Common in wet foothills and middle elevations, from 1,300 to 6,600 ft (400 to 2,000 m); less common in adjacent lowlands and on the Osa Peninsula. Often in flocks, with or without other species, at middle levels of forest and forest edge. Frequently utters a distinctive buzzy *tseet*.

Emerald Tanager *Tangara florida*

5 in (13 cm). The **black ear patch** distinguishes this brilliant bird from all other bright-green species. Uncommon in Caribbean foothills; from 1,300 to 3,300 ft (400 to 1,000 m). Almost exclusively found with mixed flocks in wet forest and at forest edge.

Speckled Tanager *Tangara guttata*

5 in (13 cm). Very distinctive; the **spotted underparts** could recall a Sharpbill (p. 260), which shares similar habitat, but note **speckled back** and thicker bill. Fairly common in wet foothills and middle elevations, from 1,300 to 4,600 ft (400 to 1,400 m); on Caribbean slope, from Tilarán Cordillera south, and on Pacific slope of Talamanca Cordillera. Also occurs on the Osa Peninsula. Forages in forest, forest edge, and gardens; usually with mixed flocks. Produces weak, colorless chipping notes.

Golden-hooded Tanager *Tangara larvata*

5 in (13 cm). A very distinctive bird. Juvenile has same pattern as adult, but is much duller. A common species of gardens and forest edges throughout wet lowlands and into middle elevations; to 5,200 ft (1,600 m). Typically travels in pairs or small groups; often with mixed flocks. Characteristic call is a buzzy twittering.

Spangle-cheeked Tanager *Tangara dowii*

5 in (13 cm). The only other highland species with a remotely similar color pattern is the Elegant Euphonia (p. 364), which has an entirely light-blue crown. Fairly common from 4,600 to 9,800 ft (1,400 to 3,000 m). Typically with mixed flocks in montane forest and at forest edge. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Black-and-yellow Tanager

Silver-throated Tanager

Emerald Tanager

Speckled Tanager

Golden-hooded Tanager

Spangle-cheeked Tanager

Rufous-winged Tanager *Tangara lavinia*

5 in (13 cm). Similar in all plumages to the Bay-headed Tanager, but note the **rufous wings** and **mostly green underparts**. Uncommon in Caribbean foothills; from 800 to 2,600 ft (250 to 800 m). Individuals or pairs travel with mixed flocks; forage at middle and upper levels of forest, second growth, and forest edge. Call is a weak *tsit*.

Green Honeycreeper *Chlorophanes spiza*

5 in (13 cm). The distinctive turquoise-green male has a black half-hood; the handsome lime-green female is distinguished by her slightly **decurved yellow bill with a dark culmen** (present in both sexes). Fairly common in wet lowlands and middle elevations; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Found at forest openings, forest edge, second growth, and gardens; often with mixed flocks.

Bay-headed Tanager *Tangara gyrola*

5 in (13 cm). **Reddish-brown head** and **deep turquoise-blue underparts** are diagnostic, even on duller plumaged female and juvenile; similar to Rufous-winged Tanager, but note green wings. Common on southern Pacific slope, to 4,900 ft (1,500 m); also common in foothills and middle elevations of Caribbean slope, from 1,300 to 4,900 ft (400 to 1,500 m), and occasionally in Caribbean lowlands. Favors middle levels of wet forest habitats, second growth, and gardens. Call is a weak *tsit*.

Blue Dacnis *Dacnis cayana*

4 in (10 cm). The mostly blue male is distinctive (the male Lovely and Turquoise Cotingas [p. 260] have quite different body forms); the female's **blue head** and **green body** are distinctive. Uncommon in wet lowlands and foothills; to 3,000 ft (900 m) on Caribbean slope, and to 3,900 ft (1,200 m) on southern Pacific slope. Favors forest edge and gardens.

Scarlet-thighed Dacnis *Dacnis venusta*

5 in (13 cm). The **electric-blue upperparts** and **black underparts** render the male unmistakable. The less-colorful female might cause confusion, perhaps suggesting a warbler, but no other CR species combines light blue-green upperparts with buffy underparts. Fairly common in foothills and middle elevations on Caribbean slope (descends to the base of mountains during second half of year). Also fairly common on Pacific slope of Talamanca Cordillera (from 1,300 to 4,900 ft [400 to 1,500 m]) and Tilarán Cordillera (from 4,300 to 4,900 ft [1,300 to 1,500 m]); uncommon on the Osa Peninsula. Feeds in fruiting trees at forest edge and in gardens.

Shining Honeycreeper *Cyanerpes lucidus*

4 in (10 cm). Male similar to male Red-legged Honeycreeper, but **bright-yellow legs** are diagnostic. The **blue streaking** on the female's breast is likewise unique. Fairly common in wet lowlands and foothills; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Feeds in forest canopy, at forest edge, and in gardens.

Red-legged Honeycreeper *Cyanerpes cyaneus*

4 in (10 cm). The male's **red legs** and glittering **pale-turquoise crown** distinguish it from the Shining Honeycreeper. The rather nondescript olive-green female might bring to mind a Tennessee Warbler (p. 294), but note the **long, slightly decurved bill**. This is one of the few CR species in which the males molt into a nonbreeding plumage after breeding. In the second half of the year, most males resemble females, but have black wings and tail. In all plumages, male flashes **yellow underwing** in flight. Common on Pacific slope and in northern central Caribbean lowlands and foothills, to 3,900 ft (1,200 m); rare in southern Caribbean lowlands. Found in forest, second growth, forest edge, and gardens; typically in small groups.

Dusky-faced Tanager *Mitrospingus cassinii*

7 in (18 cm). The **pale iris** and **olive crown** are diagnostic. Fairly common in wet Caribbean lowlands, rising to about 2,000 ft (600 m) in foothills of Central Cordillera. Noisy flocks of four or more individuals troop through dense vegetation at forest edge and along streams; habitat and bird's wary behavior often make it difficult to get a clear view of this species. While it forages, the bird constantly utters a harsh *shpik!*

Bananaquit *Coereba flaveola*

4 in (10 cm). Overall pattern somewhat resembles the much larger kiskadee-type flycatchers (p. 248), but the **curved bill** and **white wing spot** are diagnostic. Juvenile is much duller than adult and could suggest a female of the rare Black-throated Blue Warbler (p. 302), but is distinguised by its curved bill. Common from wet lowlands into middle elevations; to 5,200 ft (1,600 m). Actively works its way through shrubbery and small trees in gardens and at forest edge, feeding on flower nectar, fruits, and insects; comes to hummingbird feeders. Sings a high, scratchy twitter that could be mistaken for a hummingbird.

Rosy Thrush-Tanager *Rhodinocichla rosea*

8 in (20 cm). The **rose-colored superciliary and breast** of the male are unique. The female's superciliary and breast are a **warm tawny orange**. Because it is uncommon and because it skulks, this gorgeous bird is extremely difficult to see in its limited range within the Térraba River watershed; from about 700 to 3,300 ft (200 to 1,000 m). Forages in leaf litter in dense second growth. Has a rich, liquid voice.

Slaty Flowerpiercer *Diglossa plumbea*

4 in (10 cm). The odd bill consists of a **dark, hook-tipped upper mandible** and an **upturned, pinkish lower mandible**; compare bill with those of Slaty Finch and Peg-billed Finch. Common at forest edge and in gardens; from 3,900 ft (1,200 m) to above timberline. Uses bill to pierce the base of flowers and then drink the nectar. Song is a high, fast twitter. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Peg-billed Finch *Acanthidops bairdi*

5 in (13 cm). On both sexes, the **sharp-tipped, slightly upturned bill** is bicolored (the **lower mandible is yellowish**); compare bill with those of Slaty Finch and Slaty Flowerpiercer. Female has **buffy wing bars**. Uncommon in overgrown bushy areas and forest edge; from 4,900 ft (1,500 m) to timberline. Feeds mostly on berries, but also eats insects, seeds (especially bamboo seeds), and even flower nectar. Makes a thin, high-pitched *tsip*. Song is a harsh chittering of three or four notes with a softer, querulous ending. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Slaty Finch *Haplospiza rustica*

5 in (13 cm). The **slender conical bill** is the best way of distinguishing this species from the Peg-billed Finch and the Slaty Flowerpiercer. A rare species known from scattered sightings between 4,900 ft (1,500 m) and timberline. Forages for seeds on or near the ground, in grassy areas near highland forest. Call and song are high-pitched and weak.

Blue-black Grassquit *Volatinia jacarina*

4 in (10 cm). The male is glossier and has a **thinner and narrower bill** than any similar dark seedeater—there is little range overlap with the rare Blue Seedeater (p. 344). The female's **streaked breast** is unique among lowland seedeaters; the female migrant Indigo Bunting (p. 344), which is faintly streaked, has a whiter throat and a hint of wing bars. Common in lowlands and foothills, uncommon at middle elevations; to 5,600 ft (1,700 m). Inhabits brushy fields and areas of tall grass. Male sings a buzzy *tzeeer* that rises and falls—often given as the bird jumps/flies a foot or so into the air.

Nicaraguan Seed-Finch *Oryzoborus nuttingi*

6 in (15 cm). The male's **huge pink bill** is unmistakable. The female is very similar to the female Thick-billed Seed-Finch, though substantially larger; also resembles somewhat larger and slightly darker female Blue-black Grosbeak (p. 344), which favors denser cover. Uncommon in Caribbean lowlands. Inhabits wet fields, typically near forest edge. Sings a medley of squeaky whistles and chirps. **Endemic from Nicaragua to western Panama.**

Thick-billed Seed-Finch *Oryzoborus funereus*

5 in (13 cm). Male virtually identical to male of Caribbean race of Variable Seedeater, but note seed-finch's **straight culmen**; it is the only all-black seedeater in the southern Pacific. Female has **rich, warm-brown** coloration; smaller than the similar female Nicaraguan Seed-Finch. Uncommon in weedy areas from wet lowlands up into middle elevations; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Song is a series of whistles and chirps.

White-collared Seedeater *Sporophila torqueola*

4 in (10 cm). The only CR seedeater with **wing bars**. Fairly common in open areas, including reedy marshes, throughout lowlands and middle elevations; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Sings a slow series of clear, sweet whistles and chirps (similar to song of Yellow-bellied Seedeater).

Variable Seedeater *Sporophila corvina*

4 in (10 cm). There are two races in CR, though the females of both races are identical. Female is **drab brown**—less colorful than the rich, warm-brown female Thick-billed Seed-Finch. The **black bill** sets the female apart from the very similar female Yellow-bellied Seedeater and female Slate-colored and Ruddy-breasted Seedeaters (p. 330). Caribbean race: Male virtually identical to male Thick-billed Seed-Finch, but note seedeater's **curved culmen**. Common in open areas throughout the Caribbean slope, up to 4,900 ft (1,500 m), extending up Reventazón watershed to Cartago. Sings a fast-paced, disorderly mix of warbles and trills. Pacific race: Male could be confused with male White-collared Seedeater, but has **black throat** and **lacks wing bars**. Uncommon in northern Pacific lowlands, increasingly common in southern Pacific, where it can occur up to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Song is richer and more structured than that of Caribbean race.

Yellow-bellied Seedeater *Sporophila nigricollis*

4 in (10 cm). Male is distinctively patterned; note that belly is whitish on some individuals. The **yellowish-buff lower underparts** set the female apart from the very similar female Variable Seedeater and female Slate-colored and Ruddy-breasted Seedeaters (p. 330). Uncommon and nomadic in open weedy areas of southern Pacific; also known from Cartago and Arenal Volcano areas. Song similar to that of White-collared Seedeater, but not as long.

Ruddy-breasted Seedeater *Sporophila minuta*

4 in (10 cm). Male's **rusty underparts** are distinctive. The **buffy underparts and rump** set the female apart from the very similar female Slate-colored Seedeater and female Variable and Yellow-bellied Seedeaters (p. 328). Uncommon in southern Pacific lowlands and Caño Negro region. Flocks wander in open savanna habitat, weedy fields, and marshes. The long, sweet song combines double whistle notes.

Slate-colored Seedeater *Sporophila schistacea*

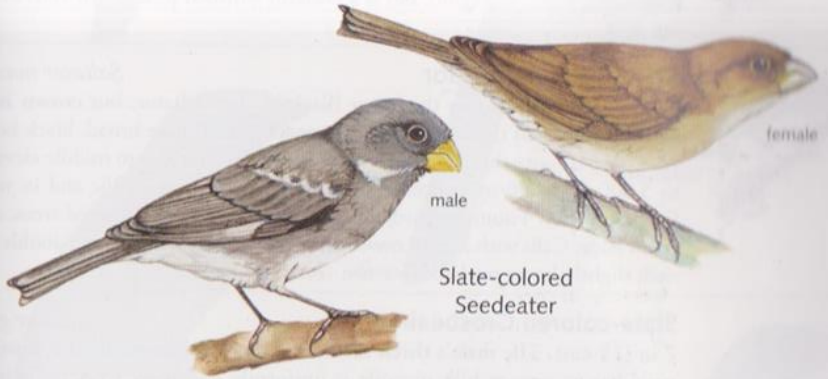
4 in (10 cm). Male's **yellow bill** is distinctive. The **whitish belly and undertail coverts** set the female apart from the very similar female Ruddy-breasted Seedeater and female Variable and Yellow-bellied Seedeaters (p. 328). A rare and irregularly occurring species that travels in small flocks on southern half of both Pacific and Caribbean slopes. Favors tangled growth at forest edge. Song consists of high, metallic, warbling trills.

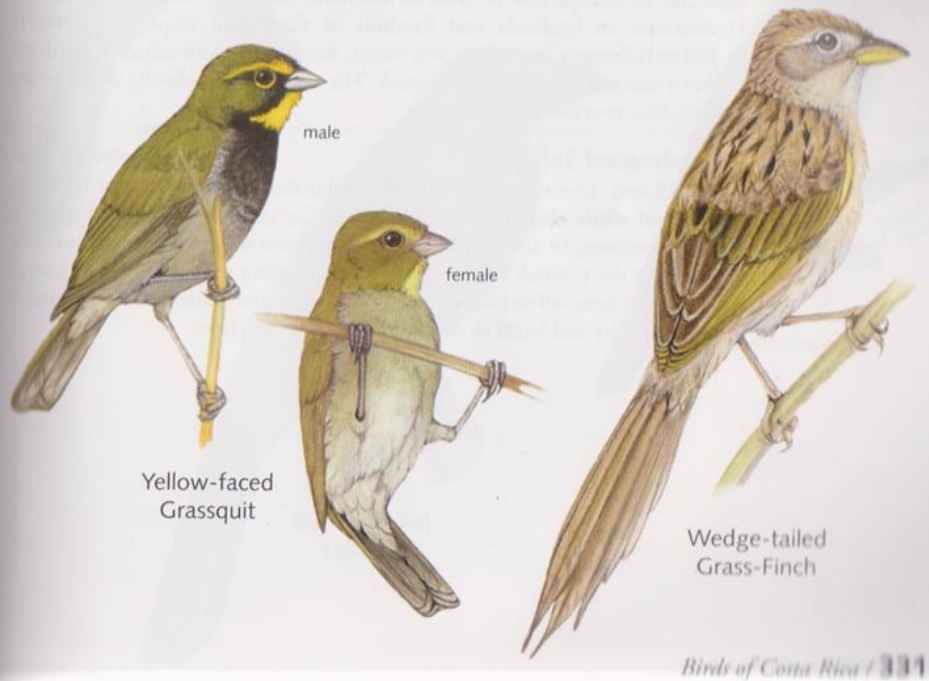
Yellow-faced Grassquit *Tiaris olivaceus*

4 in (10 cm). The male's **yellow facial markings** are diagnostic; female shows a similar, but indistinct, pattern. Both sexes are more **olive green** than other seedeaters. Common, mostly at middle elevations, from 2,000 to 7,200 ft (600 to 2,200 m); occasionally occurs in lowlands. Favors fields, roadsides, and gardens. Song is a thin, fast twittering.

Wedge-tailed Grass-Finch *Emberizoides herbicola*

7 in (18 cm). **Long tail** is distinctive. Rare in intermontane valleys of southern Pacific, mostly from 300 to 2,600 ft (100 to 800 m). Also, one sighting at Isla Damas. Found in fields of tall grass; unfortunately, much of its original habitat has been destroyed to make way for pineapple plantations. Call is a high, sharp *chip*.





Streaked Saltator *Saltator striatipectus*

7 in (18 cm). The combination of **olive streaking below** and **plain olive above** is distinctive. Fairly common in southern Pacific, from sea level (in Coto Colorado Valley) to 5,200 ft (1,600 m); also known to occur in the valley at Ujarrás. Prefers thickets and scrub, which can make it difficult to see. Sings two to four sweet, whistled *tsu* notes followed by an upwardly inflected *tsweeee*.

Grayish Saltator *Saltator coerulescens*

8 in (20 cm). The only **gray bird** in CR with **white throat and superciliary**. Fairly common in the Central Valley (to 5,900 ft [1,800 m]) and in sections of Caribbean lowlands; uncommon on Pacific slope of Tilarán Cordillera; rare around the Gulf of Nicoya. Found in gardens and brushy areas with scattered trees. Song varies by region, but is a pleasant whistled phrase that ends on a rising note.

Buff-throated Saltator *Saltator maximus*

8 in (20 cm). Similar to the larger Black-headed Saltator, but **crown is dark grayish olive** and the **lower throat is peachy buff** (note broad, black border). Juvenile has sooty throat. Common in wet lowlands and into middle elevations, to 5,900 ft (1,800 m); uncommon to rare in northern Pacific and in western Central Valley. Found in gardens, in brushy areas with scattered trees, and at forest edge. Calls with a shrill *tseent*. Sings a melodic series of three double notes, each slightly lower pitched: *cheerilee, cheerilu, tsu-tsu*.

Slate-colored Grosbeak *Saltator grossus*

7 in (18 cm). The male's **thick red bill** and **white throat** are diagnostic. Female has an orange bill; juvenile is uniformly dark gray with a grayish bill. Uncommon in lowlands and foothills of Caribbean slope; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Forages in mature wet forest, forest edge, and adjacent gardens. Makes a sharp *spink* and a harsh *caaah*. The rich song of whistles and warbles is wren-like or oriole-like in quality.

Black-headed Saltator *Saltator atriceps*

10 in (25 cm). Distinguished from the similar Buff-throated Saltator by **black crown** and **white throat**. Common in wet Caribbean lowlands and up into middle elevations; to 4,300 ft (1,300 m). Numerous scattered reports from hills surounding the Central Valley suggest it is spreading westward. Noisy groups forage in thickets, tall second growth, forest edge, and gardens. The distinctive voice is scratchy and harsh in comparison to other saltators.

EMBERIZIDAE. The rather somber-plumaged birds of this family are mostly found on or near the ground in habitats ranging from open fields and subalpine paramo to rainforest interior. The majority have conical bills that they use to crack open seeds, but they also supplement their diet with fruit and invertebrates. The larger finches and sparrows often forage in leaf litter by scratching with their feet. The recently added chlorospingus (formerly known as *bush-tanagers*) are predominantly arboreal and feed mostly on berries.

Yellow-thighed Finch *Pselliophorus tibialis*

7 in (18 cm). The **puffy yellow thigh feathers** are diagnostic. Juvenile is entirely dark and could be difficult to identify, though distinctive adults are usually nearby. Common from Central Cordillera south, from 4,600 ft (1,400 m) to timberline; less common in higher parts of Tilarán Cordillera. Pairs or small groups actively forage in mature forest, second growth, forest edge, and gardens; they usually stay quite low, but sometimes venture high up into trees. Song is high, spritely, and somewhat squeaky. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Large-footed Finch *Pezopetes capitalis*

8 in (20 cm). Somber and bulky; the black face and crown stripes show little contrast with the dark-gray hood. Fairly common from Central Cordillera south; from 6,600 ft (2,000 m) to above timberline. Often scratches in leaf litter with both feet; occurs in undergrowth of highland forest and second growth, and in paramo. Song is a languid medley of sweet whistles and chirps, rather wren-like in quality. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Sooty-faced Finch *Arremon crassirostris*

7 in (18 cm). The **flecked malar stripe, dark throat**, and **yellow belly** are diagnostic. Fairly common on Caribbean slope, from Tilarán Cordillera south, from 2,000 to 4,900 ft (600 to 1,500 m); rare on Pacific slope of northern Talamanca Cordillera, from 3,900 to 5,200 ft (1,200 to 1,600 m). Forages in understory of wet forest. Call consists of two to four piercing notes: *tsee, tsEE.* **Endemic to CR and Panama.**

Orange-billed Sparrow *Arremon aurantiirostris*

6 in (15 cm). Adult has **bright-orange bill, white superciliary**, and **black breast band**. Juvenile has black bill; distinguished from similar Costa Rican Brush-Finch by white superciliary and black breast band. Common from lowlands into middle elevations; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Pairs or small groups forage in the understory of mature wet forest and tall second growth. Birds on the Pacific side of the country sing a medley of shrill, tinkling notes; vocalization of Caribbean birds lacks the tinkling quality.

Costa Rican Brush-Finch *Arremon costaricensis*

8 in (20 cm). Told apart from similar Black-striped Sparrow (p. 336) by **conspicuous white throat** and **black mask** (vs. black eye line). Juvenile Orange-billed Sparrow also has black bill and white throat, but shows white superciliary and black breast band. Uncommon in southern Pacific foothills; from 1,000 to 3,900 ft (300 to 1,200 m). Favors dense undergrowth (hence hard to see), but sometimes enters adjacent gardens and forest. Call and song consist of high, penetrating notes.

Yellow-thighed Finch

Large-footed Finch

Sooty-faced Finch

Orange-billed Sparrow

Costa Rican Brush-Finch

Chestnut-capped Brush-Finch *Arremon brunneinucha*

7 in (18 cm). The combination of **chestnut crown** and **bright-white throat** is diagnostic. Common at middle elevations; from 3,000 to 8,200 ft (900 to 2,500 m). Inhabits understory of wet forest, advanced second growth, and forest edge. Very high, thin notes comprise both call and song.

Olive Sparrow *Arremonops rufivirgatus*

5 in (13 cm). Coloration and pattern reminiscent of a Worm-eating Warbler (p. 290), but note **conical bill**. Similar to Black-striped Sparrow, but note brown-and-beige head (vs. black and gray). Common in northern Pacific and western Central Valley; to 3,000 ft (900 m). Inhabits understory of forest, forest edge, and adjacent second growth. The song is a series of high notes that accelerate and fall slightly in pitch toward the end; each series lasts four or five seconds.

Black-striped Sparrow *Arremonops conirostris*

6 in (15 cm). In addition to the **black-striped gray head**, note the white throat and **gray cheeks** (compare with Olive Sparrow). Told apart from similar Costa Rican Brush-Finch (p. 334) by black eye line (vs. black mask). Common in wet lowlands and foothills; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Favors tangled undergrowth at forest edge, overgrown open areas, and shaded gardens. The attention-grabbing song begins slowly with mellow, sweet *chwee* notes that gradually accelerate to a rapid pace toward the end; the performance lasts more than ten seconds.

White-naped Brush-Finch *Atlapetes albinucha*

7 in (18 cm). Distinguished by **white crown stripe** and **yellow throat**. Fairly common from 3,000 to 6,600 ft (900 to 2,000 m); rare above 6,600 ft (2,000 m). Forages at lower levels of second growth, weedy open areas, and forest edge. Voices high, thin notes in both call and song.

Prevost's Ground-Sparrow *Melozone biarcuata*

6 in (15 cm). The **black-and-white facial markings** and **bright reddish-brown crown and nape** are diagnostic. Uncommon in the Central Valley, from 2,000 to 5,200 ft (600 to 1,600 m); has also been sighted northwest of Monteverde. Forages on or near the ground in scrub, grass, hedgerows, shaded coffee plantations, and gardens. Call is a thin *tsip*. Sometimes the CR population is considered a distinct species and then called *Cabanis's Ground-Sparrow* (*Melozone cabanisi*).

White-eared Ground-Sparrow *Melozone leucotis*

7 in (18 cm). Large **white spots in front of and behind eyes** and **bright-yellow on sides of neck** are diagnostic. Fairly common from Pacific slope of Tilarán Cordillera to eastern Central Valley; from 2,600 to 6,600 ft (800 to 2,000 m). Found in undergrowth of humid woodlands, heavily shaded gardens, coffee plantations, and along ravines. Call is a shrill *tsip*. Song begins slowly, then quickly accelerates into a profusion of loud, high notes.

Rusty Sparrow *Aimophila rufescens*

7 in (18 cm). Only CR sparrow with **russet crown** (with narrow gray center stripe); has obvious **black lateral throat stripe**. Uncommon and confined to grassy slopes dotted with boulders, dense shrubs, and small trees on the Pacific slope of the Guanacaste Cordillera; from 1,600 to 3,600 ft (500 to 1,100 m). In 2005, a small population was discovered south of San Ignacio de Acosta. Sings resolutely with a bright *cheet, chee-chee-chee yew*.

Botteri's Sparrow *Peucaea botterii*

6 in (15 cm). A dull sparrow with **faint lateral throat stripe and postocular stripe**; does not have crown stripe. Rare; found only on open, grassy hillsides and rocky slopes along the Pacific slope of the Guanacaste Cordillera; from 1,600 to 3,600 ft (500 to 1,100 m). Song is a short accelerating trill, preceded by several sharp *tsip* notes.

Chipping Sparrow *Spizella passerina*

5 in (13 cm). At first glance might suggest a juvenile Rufous-collared Sparrow (p. 342), but **unstreaked underparts are grayish**; also note **gray rump**. Casual migrant, known from three records: San Pedro, east of San José (Sept 1977), Cahuita (Nov 2001), and a bird photographed in Carate (Nov 2010).

Clay-colored Sparrow *Spizella pallida*

5 in (13 cm). Nonbreeding adult is very similar to Chipping Sparrow, but has pale median crown stripe, pale lores, well-defined lateral throat stripe, and brown rump. Casual migrant, known from four records of birds photographed: Playa del Rey (April 2012), Cocos Island (June and Nov 2012), and Turrialba (Jan 2013).

Grasshopper Sparrow *Ammodramus savannarum*

5 in (13 cm). A small sparrow with a **buffy breast** and **yellow-orange lores**; has dark crown with pale stripe down the middle. Uncommon resident of brushy grasslands on lower Pacific slope of Guanacaste Cordillera and in upper Tempisque River basin; from 300 to 2,600 ft (100 to 800 m). Rare winter resident in wet fields of eastern Central Valley. Produces an insect-like buzzy song.

Lincoln's Sparrow *Melospiza lincolnii*

6 in (15 cm). Recalls a juvenile Rufous-collared Sparrow (p. 342), but has a **wide, gray superciliary** and a **buffy malar stripe**. Casual migrant, from Nov to May, with scattered reports from Monteverde, Cartago, San Pedro (east of San José), and, more recently, from Tortuguero (Oct 2003) and Isla Damas (Dec 2010).

Stripe-headed Sparrow *Peucaea ruficauda*

7 in (18 cm). The **boldly striped head** distinguishes this handsome sparrow. Common in northern Pacific lowlands, uncommon in western Central Valley; to 3,300 ft (1,000 m). Sightings near Dominical (2004) suggest it may be spreading south along Pacific coast. Small groups forage on the ground in brushy areas; often seen along fence rows. Song is a squeaky sputtering.

Lark Sparrow *Chondestes grammacus*

6 in (15 cm). Head pattern and dark breast spot could bring to mind a Prevost's Ground-Sparrow (p. 336), but Lark Sparrow has **streaked brown back**. Casual migrant, known from five records: Jacó (Jan 1990); Tortuguero (Oct 1992); Abangaritos (Nov 2000); Cenizas de Pérez Zeledón, south of San Isidro de El General (March 2005); and Chomes (Nov 2006).

Common Chlorospingus *Chlorospingus flavopectus*

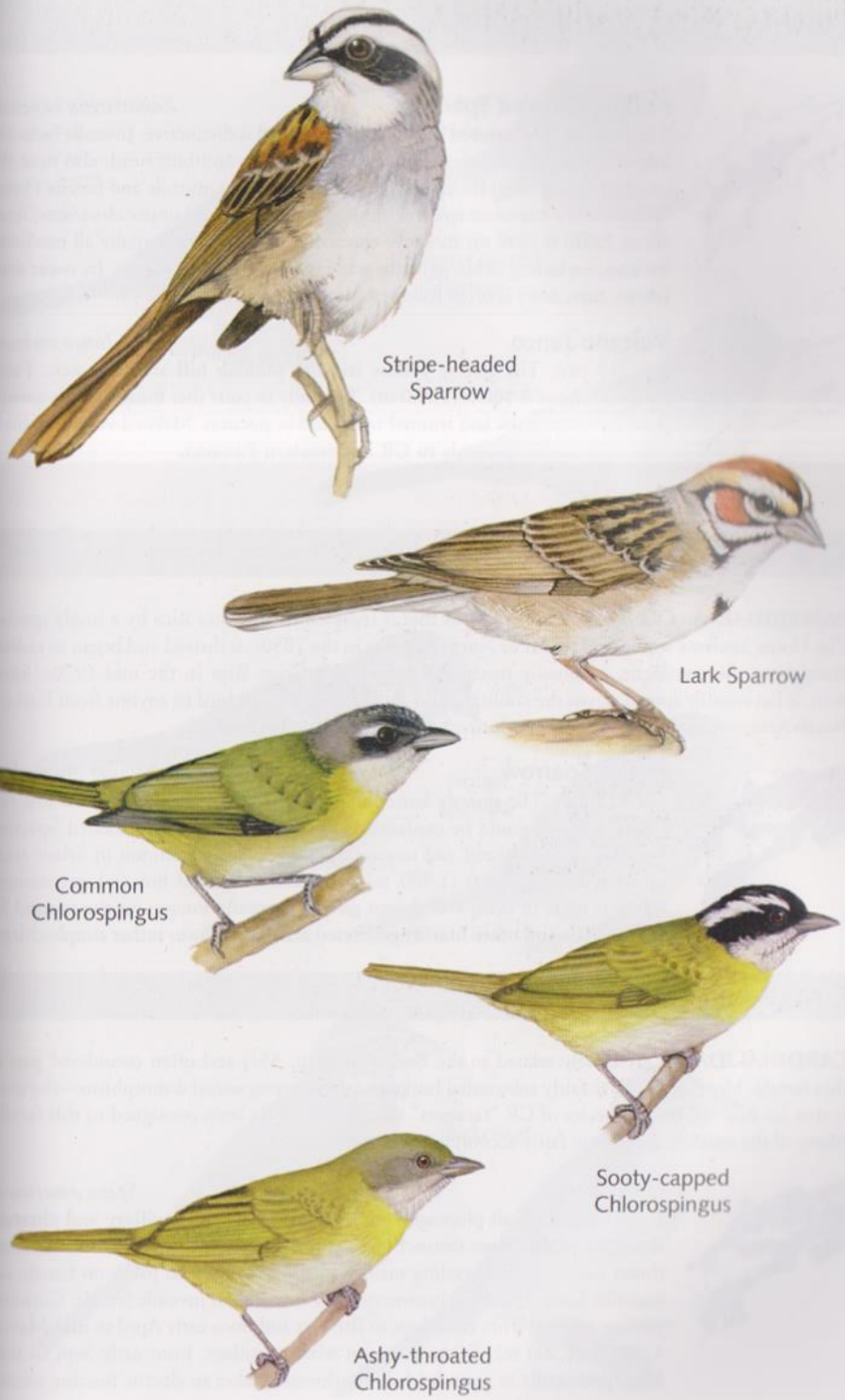
5 in (13 cm). The **triangular white spot behind the eye** is the key field mark on this drab olive-backed bird. One of the most common middle-elevation species; from 2,000 to 7,200 ft (600 to 2,200 m). Actively forages at lower and middle levels of forest and adjacent second growth and gardens; almost always in small groups that are regularly accompanied by other species, especially Three-striped Warblers (p. 312). Noisy and nonmusical, it produces high, weak notes that are often slurred together in a rapid twittering.

Sooty-capped Chlorospingus *Chlorospingus pileatus*

5 in (13 cm). The **broad white superciliary** has a jagged, lightning-bolt look to it. Common in highlands above 6,600 ft (2,000 m); fairly common on highest peaks of Tilarán Cordillera. Actively forages at lower and middle levels of forest and forest edge, in groups and in mixed flocks. Sings with a thin, squeaky twittering. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Ashy-throated Chlorospingus *Chlorospingus canigularis*

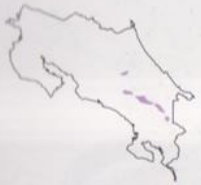
5 in (13 cm). On this plain-headed chlorospingus, note the **pale-gray throat bordered by a dark-gray lateral throat stripe** and the yellow-olive breast separating the pale throat and belly. Uncommon on the Caribbean slope of Central Valley volcanoes and in the Reventazón River watershed; from 1,300 to 3,900 ft (400 to 1,200 m). Usually stays high up in the canopy of wet forest, where it typically forages with mixed species flocks.



Finches, New World Sparrows, Allies

Rufous-collared Sparrow *Zonotrichia capensis*

5 in (13 cm). The **crested black-and-gray head** is distinctive. Juvenile lacks the rufous collar, but still shows a crest on its brown-and-buff head; also note the streaked breast. Both features distinguish it from the juvenile and female House Sparrow. The common sparrow throughout middle and upper elevations, from about 2,000 ft (600 m) to above timberline. Found in essentially all nonforest habitats, including fields, gardens, and even downtown San José. Its sweet song (*tseeur, tseer, tseer*) is often followed by a higher-pitched trill.



Volcano Junco *Junco vulcani*

6 in (15 cm). The glaring **yellow iris** and **pinkish bill** are diagnostic. Fairly common above 8,900 ft (2,700 m). Typically in pairs that forage on the ground in areas with shrubs and stunted trees, and in paramo. Makes a variety of high, weak utterances. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Old World Sparrows

PASSERIDAE. An Old World family of birds that is represented in Costa Rica by a single species. The House Sparrow was introduced into North America in the 1850s; it thrived and began to radiate throughout the continent, eventually reaching northwestern Costa Rica in the mid-1970s. Since then, it has steadily spread across the country. This should be a familiar bird to anyone from Europe, North America, and the many other regions where it has become established.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

6 in (15 cm). The smartly attired male is distinctive; the drab female and very similar juvenile could be confused with the juvenile Rufous-collared Sparrow, but note rounded head and unstreaked breast. Fairly common in urban areas, up to at least 4,600 ft (1,400 m). Particularly fond of bus and gas stations, where it nests in open-ended iron girders; typically forages on the ground for spilled seeds and other human-generated scraps. Produces rather simple chirps.

Grosbeaks, Buntings, Allies

CARDINALIDAE. Very closely related to the Emberizidae (p. 334) and often considered part of that family. Most species have fairly substantial beaks and show strong sexual dimorphism—the same is true for nine of the ten species of CR "tanagers" that have recently been reassigned to this family. Many of the resident species are fairly accomplished singers.

Dickcissel *Spiza americana*

6 in (15 cm). In all plumages, adults show **yellow superciliary** and **chestnut shoulder patch**. Note distinct black throat patch on breeding male, indistinct throat patch on nonbreeding male, and absence of throat patch on female and juvenile. Juvenile male is browner on the breast than juvenile female. Common passage migrant from early Sept to late Oct and from early April to mid-May; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Fairly common winter resident, from early Sept to mid-May, principally in grain fields in northwest. Makes an electric buzzing sound.

Blue-black Grosbeak *Cyanocompsa cyanoides*

7 in (18 cm). The male's bluish tones and **heavy dark bill** set it apart from any of the similar seedeaters and finches. The female is very similar to the female Nicaraguan Seed-Finch (p. 328), but favors less open habitat. Common in wet lowlands and foothills, and uncommon in northern Pacific; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Dwells in lower levels of mature forest, gallery forest, second growth, and forest edge. The regularly heard song is a descending series of unhurried, sweet whistles that are often followed by a rapid twitter.

Blue Seedeater *Amaurospiza concolor*

5 in (13 cm). In poor light, male can look blackish; note the **conical bill**. (Little range overlap with the Blue-black Grassquit [p. 326].) Female is more **tawny** than similar seedeaters. Male and female perhaps best told apart from similar species by habitat. Rare in middle elevations and highlands, from 3,300 to 7,200 ft (1,000 to 2,200 m); also rare on highest hills of Nicoya Peninsula. Favors bamboo clusters along cloud forest edge, where it forages higher off the ground than other seedeaters typically do. Sings with sweet, descending notes.

Blue Grosbeak *Passerina caerulea*

7 in (18 cm). The **cinnamon wing bars** distinguish both sexes (breeding male Indigo Bunting lacks wing bars). Uncommon resident in northern Pacific (south to Esterillos) and in western Central Valley; to 3,300 ft (1,000 m). Rare migrants add to the population from Oct to April, and also occur in the Caribbean lowlands, chiefly along the coast. Prefers open, brushy areas with scattered trees. The call is a sharp, metallic *tchink*.

Indigo Bunting *Passerina cyanea*

5 in (13 cm). Breeding male is distinctive (male Blue Grosbeak has wing bars). Female shows **faint streaking on breast** and **narrow wing bars** (compare with female Blue-black Grassquit [p. 326]). Uncommon but widespread migrant, from Oct to early May; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Favors open brushy areas. Call is a sharp, dry *spit*.

Black-faced Grosbeak *Caryothraustes poliogaster*

7 in (18 cm). The thick bill, **black face**, and **yellow head and breast** are diagnostic. Common in Caribbean lowlands and foothills; to 3,000 ft (900 m). Noisy groups of up to thirty or more birds travel through all levels of mature wet forest, forest edge, and adjacent gardens; often in mixed flocks. This species has a distinctive, sharp, buzzy call that it emits almost constantly while foraging.

Black-thighed Grosbeak *Pheucticus tibialis*

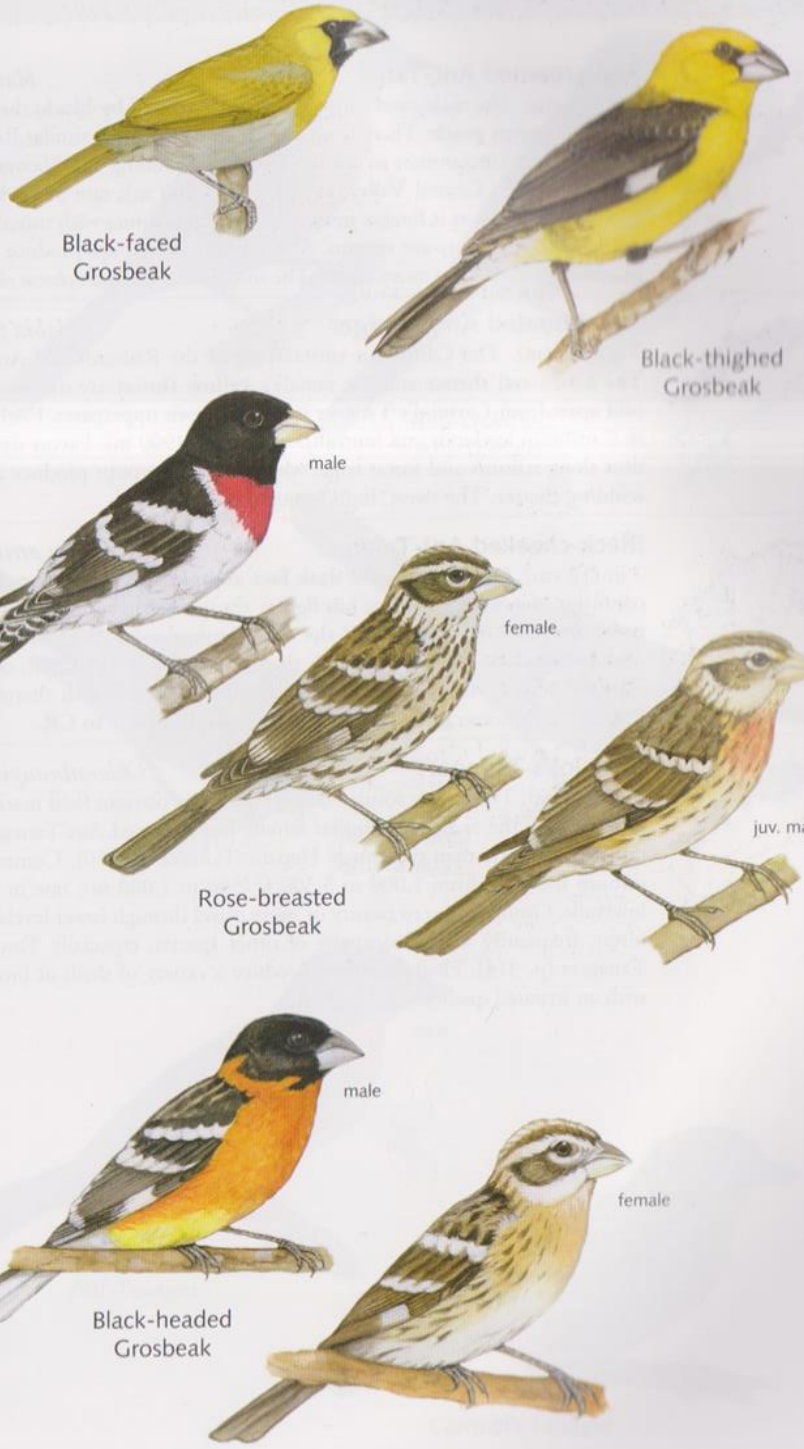
8 in (20 cm). The large bill, **black-and-yellow** coloration, and **white wing spot** are diagnostic. Fairly common in middle elevations and highlands, from Miravalles Volcano south, from 3,300 to 8,500 ft (1,000 to 2,600 m); occasionally descends to the Caribbean lowlands along mountain bases. Found in gardens and at forest edge. The call note is a sharp metallic *pwik*. The sweet song rambles up and down the scale with phrases that may end in a rapid trill or an emphatically repeated note. **Endemic from CR to western Panama.**

Rose-breasted Grosbeak *Pheucticus ludovicianus*

8 in (20 cm). Adult male is unmistakable. The **prominent white wing bars** and **thick, pale bill** differentiate female (adult and juvenile) and juvenile male from other brown, streaked seedeaters and finches. Fairly common migrant throughout the country, mostly from Oct to April; to 7,200 ft (2,200 m). Found in gardens and at forest edge. Gives a sharp, squeaky *eenk*.

Black-headed Grosbeak *Pheucticus melanocephalus*

8 in (20 cm). The **black-and-cinnamon** male is distinctive. Female is very similar to adult female and juvenile male Rose-breasted Grosbeak, but has **noticeably bicolored bill**. Female is further distinguished from juvenile male Rose-breasted Grosbeak by **yellow wing linings** (pink on latter species). Casual migrant; normal wintering range is only to southern Mexico. Sightings from San Isidro de El General (Dec 1977), Santa Rosa NP (Oct 1978), Monteverde (Oct 2001), and Cerro de la Muerte (Jan 2004).



Red-crowned Ant-Tanager *Habia rubica*

7 in (18 cm). The male's **red crown patch is bordered by black**; the female has a **golden crown patch**. There is no range overlap with the similar Red-throated Ant-Tanager. Uncommon in Pacific foothills, including the Nicoya Peninsula and the western Central Valley, to 3,900 ft (1,200 m); rare in lowlands. Stays fairly low in forest as it forages in small groups, sometimes with mixed flocks; often accompanies army-ant swarms. Active and noisy; groups produce many non-musical sounds as they move about. The song is a loud, harsh *cheeta cheeta cheeta.*

Red-throated Ant-Tanager *Habia fuscicauda*

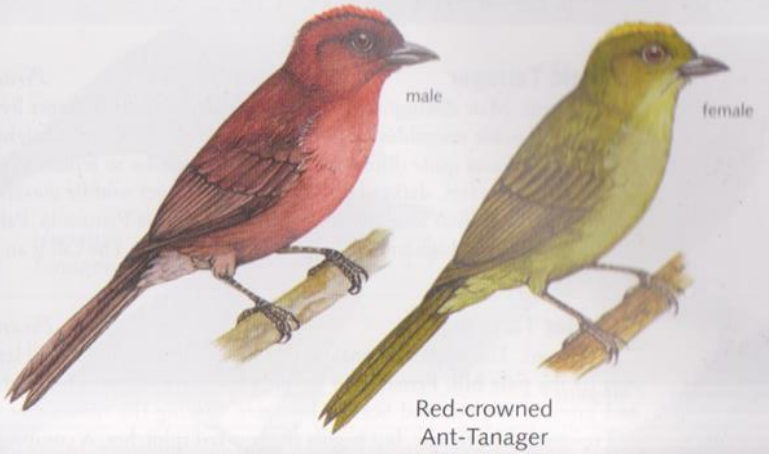
7 in (18 cm). The Caribbean counterpart of the Red-crowned Ant-Tanager. The male's **red throat** and the female's **yellow throat** are diagnostic; female told apart from Carmiol's Tanager by olive-brown upperparts. Fairly common in Caribbean lowlands and foothills; to 3,000 ft (900 m). Favors dense vegetation along streams and forest edge, where foraging groups produce a wren-like scolding chatter. The sweet, liquid song is also wren-like.

Black-cheeked Ant-Tanager *Habia atrimaxillaris*

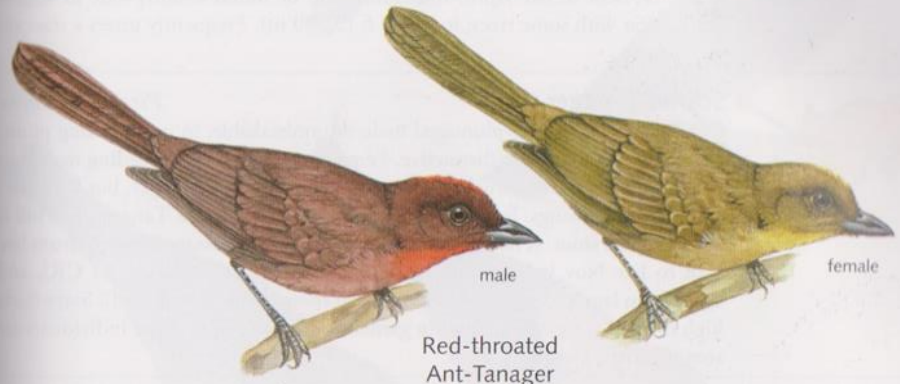
7 in (18 cm). On the male, the **dark face** and **pinkish throat** should preclude confusion; female similar but has lighter throat. Fairly common in its limited range around Golfo Dulce and the Osa Peninsula. Small groups, often with mixed flocks, move noisily through the lower levels of wet forest, occasionally coming to forest edge or into second growth. Combines harsh chatter with lilting, flute-like notes; easily mistaken for a wren. **Endemic to CR.**

Carmiol's Tanager *Chlorothraupis carmioli*

7 in (18 cm). This rather rotund tanager lacks any obvious field marks, but it is greener than the somewhat similar female Red-throated Ant-Tanager and has duller underparts than the female Hepatic Tanager (p. 350). Common in Caribbean foothills, from 1,000 to 3,300 ft (300 to 1,000 m); rare in Caribbean lowlands. Groups of up to twenty or more travel through lower levels of mature forest, frequently in the company of other species, especially Tawny-crested Tanagers (p. 314). Flock members produce a variety of shrill or buzzy sounds with an irritated quality.



Red-crowned Ant-Tanager



Red-throated Ant-Tanager

Black-cheeked Ant-Tanager

Carmiol's Tanager

Hepatic Tanager *Piranga flava*

7 in (18 cm). Male distinguished from the male Summer Tanager by **dark bill and lores**. Female resembles Carmiol's Tanager (p. 348), but is brighter **yellow below** and behaves quite differently; female also similar to female Scarlet Tanager, but note heavier, darker bill. Uncommon in wet middle elevations, from 2,000 to 5,900 ft (600 to 1,800 m); rare in hills of Osa Peninsula. Pairs or individuals forage fairly high in forest and adjacent gardens. The call is an ascending *chup-chi-dit*.

Summer Tanager *Piranga rubra*

7 in (18 cm). The bright-red male is distinguished from the male Hepatic Tanager by the **pale bill**. Female and juvenile are more **ochre colored** than female and juvenile Hepatic and Scarlet Tanagers. During the male's first spring, he still resembles the female, but begins to show red splotches. A common migrant, from mid-Sept to late April. Individuals can be found countrywide in almost any habitat with some trees; to 8,200 ft (2,500 m). Frequently utters a staccato *chi-ti-duh*.

Scarlet Tanager *Piranga olivacea*

6 in (15 cm). Breeding-plumaged male is unmistakable; in nonbreeding plumage, the **black wings** are distinctive. Female is similar to nonbreeding male, but wings are not as dark; female similar to female Summer Tanager, but is greener and has darker wings; female also similar to female Hepatic Tanager, but bill is paler and less stout. A fairly common and widespread passage migrant; from late Sept to late Nov (when more numerous on the Caribbean side of CR), and again from late March to early May (when more evenly distributed). Stays fairly high in trees at forest edge and in gardens; often several or more individuals are seen together. Generally silent.

Western Tanager *Piranga ludoviciana*

7 in (18 cm). Shows **pale bill** and **two wing bars** in all plumages. Female distinguished from female White-winged Tanager (p. 352) by pale bill and greener underparts; also distinguished from female Flame-colored Tanager (p. 352) by unstreaked back. A migrant present from Oct to April: uncommon in northern Pacific lowlands (south to Carara NP), and rare in western Central Valley and in southern Pacific; to 7,200 ft (2,200 m). Call is a rising *pirdidit*.

Flame-colored Tanager *Piranga bidentata*

7 in (18 cm). Both sexes have **dusky streaking on the back**, unlike any comparably colored tanager species. Female similar to female Western Tanager (p. 350), but note streaked back and yellow belly. Fairly common in highlands on Central and Talamanca Cordilleras, from about 3,900 ft (1,200 m) to timberline. Prefers forest edge and garden habitats, where individuals or pairs forage at all levels. Call is a resonant, wooden *kriDECK*.

White-winged Tanager *Piranga leucoptera*

5 in (13 cm). On the male, combination of red back, bright-white wing bars, and small black mask is diagnostic. The female resembles the female Western Tanager (p. 350), but has a bicolored bill and is brighter yellow underneath. Uncommon at middle elevations, from Tilarán Cordillera south; from 3,300 to 7,200 ft (1,000 to 2,200 m). Usually at upper levels of wet forest and forest edge; often with mixed flocks. Makes a thin, weak, rising *tsu-weet*.

Painted Bunting *Passerina ciris*

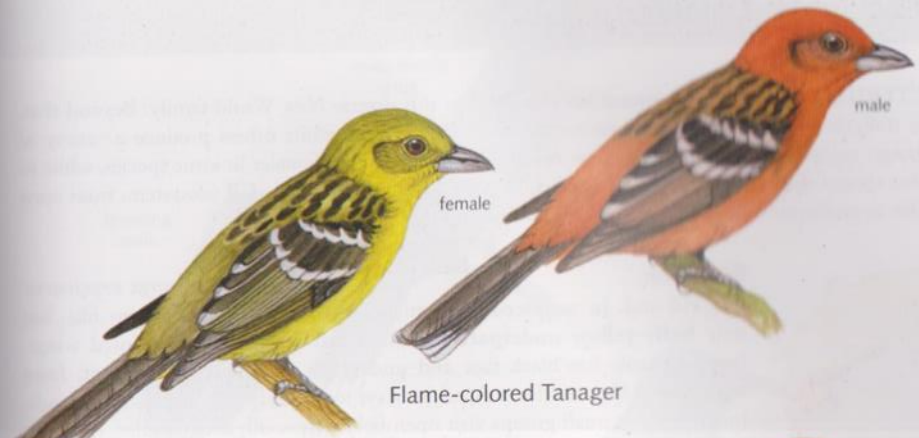
5 in (13 cm). Adult male is unmistakable. The plain-greenish female and drab juvenile are identified by absence of markings (female Yellow-faced Grassquit [p. 330] always shows a trace of facial pattern; female Lesser Goldfinch [p. 364] has dark wings with white patches); the conical bill should distinguish female and juvenile from any warbler. Uncommon migrant on Pacific slope and in western Central Valley, from late Oct to early April; to 4,300 ft (1,300 m). Found in thickets and lower levels of second growth. Makes a sharp *chip*.

Munias

ESTRILDIDAE. An Old World family of birds that resemble finches. Several species are popular in the caged bird trade, and escaped (or introduced) birds have established populations in different parts of the New World.

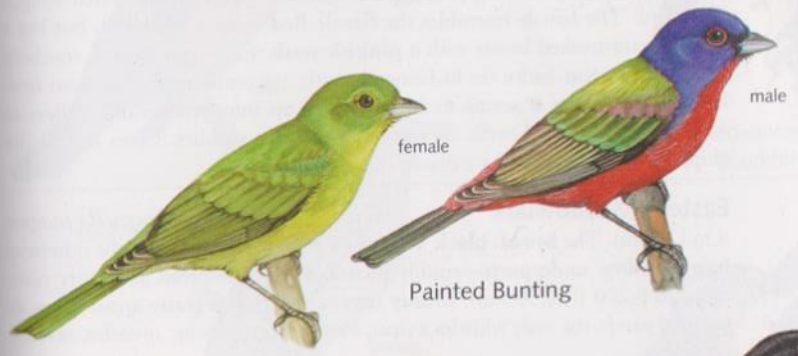
Tricolored Munia *Lonchura malacca*

5 in (13 cm). The adult's large black belly spot distinguishes it from the similarly patterned male Yellow-bellied Seedeater (p. 328). Brownish juvenile is chunkier than seedeaters. In 1999, a small population was discovered near the sugar mill in La Guinea, east of Filadelfia. Numbers of individuals have since increased and, although nomadic due to shifting availability of grass seed, the species has been expanding its range. There have been sightings as far south as Palmar Sur and into the western Central Valley (Grecia). Prefers tall grass along edges of cane fields and irrigation ditches. Gives a high, thin *dweet, dweet*.



Flame-colored Tanager

White-winged Tanager



Painted Bunting

Tricolored Munia

ICTERIDAE. The pointed, conical bill characterizes this diverse New World family. Beyond that, it's difficult to generalize. Some species are melodious singers, while others produce a variety of strange, cacophonous sounds. Males are noticeably larger than the females in some species, while in other species they are more brightly colored. Icterids inhabit almost every CR ecosystem, from open fields to rainforest canopy and from mangrove swamps to city streets.

Bobolink *Dolichonyx oryzivorus*

7 in (18 cm). In nonbreeding plumage, this bird is rather sparrow-like, but note **buffy-yellow underparts, pointed tail feathers**, and pointed wings. Breeding male has black face and underparts. Rare passage migrant, from mid-Sept to Oct and from April to May; most likely in Caribbean lowlands. Individuals or small groups visit open fields, especially rice paddies. In flight, whistles a sweet *pink*.

Red-winged Blackbird *Agelaius phoeniceus*

9 in (23 cm). The male's **red-and-yellow shoulders** are distinctive (compare with male Red-breasted Blackbird); female and juvenile are more **heavily streaked** than the female Red-breasted Blackbird. Common in northern central Caribbean lowlands and from Palo Verde NP region south to Parrita; spreading southeast on both Pacific and Caribbean slopes. Inhabits marshes, wet fields, and edges of mangroves; often in flocks. Several sweet whistled notes are followed by a shrill, raspy *kreeEE!*

Red-breasted Blackbird *Sturnella militaris*

7 in (18 cm). Male's **red underparts** are diagnostic; note, however, that male shows red shoulders in flight and could therefore suggest a male Red-winged Blackbird. The female resembles the female Red-winged Blackbird, but has a relatively unstreaked breast with a **pinkish wash**. Fairly common in southern Pacific, from San Isidro de El General south; uncommon in Caribbean lowlands, from where it seems to be spreading up into the Central Valley; to 4,300 ft (1,300 m). Dwells in wet fields and rice paddies. Gives several dry chipping notes followed by a drawn-out, buzzy trill.

Eastern Meadowlark *Sturnella magna*

8 in (20 cm). The **broad, black V on the breast**—together with the otherwise **bright-yellow underparts**—readily identifies it. Widespread and fairly common; to 8,200 ft (2,500 m). Mostly terrestrial, in open grassy areas. From an exposed perch, the male whistles a clear, sweet, two-part song: *sweedloo, sweedee.*

Melodious Blackbird *Dives dives*

10 in (25 cm). **Entirely black**; even the eye and the bill are black (compare with grackles, cowbirds, and caciques). First recorded in March 1987, now widespread and fairly common; to 7,200 ft (2,200 m). Pairs inhabit gardens in all climatic regions. Very vocal; whistles a loud, slurred *wheeur, wheeur, whit-wheeur*.

Shiny Cowbird *Molothrus bonariensis*

8 in (20 cm). Male resembles Bronzed Cowbird, but has **dark iris** and **purple sheen** to body plumage. Rather nondescript female is pale grayish-brown with **faint streaking on breast**. A female was first seen near Hone Creek (south of Cahuita), in April 2004; since then, the species has continued to spread northward in the Caribbean lowlands (seen in Medio Queso, Nov 2011) and foothills (e.g., Turrialba). Forages on ground in open areas and pastures. Females are brood parasites on a variety of passerine species. Whistles high, liquid notes.

Bronzed Cowbird *Molothrus aeneus*

8 in (20 cm). Male is an **all-black** bird with a **red iris**; female is duller with brownish iris (compare with female Shiny Cowbird); juvenile has a dark iris. This species is much smaller than the very similar Giant Cowbird. Fairly common and widespread; to 6,200 ft (1,900 m). Individuals or flocks of up to 100 or more forage on the ground (in fields and along roadsides); often perches on utility wires. Females are brood parasites on a variety of passerine species.

Giant Cowbird *Molothrus oryzivorus*

Male 13 in (33 cm); female 11 in (28 cm). Adults have **red iris** (juvenile has brown iris); all individuals show **flat tail** in flight. Note that male has a purplish gloss on its black plumage. Both sexes are larger than Bronzed Cowbird. Uncommon throughout Caribbean lowlands and foothills, rare in Central Valley and in southern Pacific; to 5,600 ft (1,700 m). Most readily seen at active oropendola (p. 362) nest colonies, where parasitic females attempt to lay their eggs.

Great-tailed Grackle *Quiscalus mexicanus*

Male 17 in (43 cm); female 13 in (33 cm). The **long tail (creased in a distinct V)** and **yellow iris** distinguish male from other black birds. Smaller, paler female probably responsible for most mistaken reports of Nicaraguan Grackle outside of that bird's limited range. Common and widespread; to 6,600 ft (2,000 m). Commensal with humans almost anywhere there are even a few dwellings. Walks with a swagger; hundreds of noisy individuals roost communally. Produces a wide variety of unmusical sounds.

Nicaraguan Grackle *Quiscalus nicaraguensis*

Male 12 in (30 cm); female 10 in (25 cm). Similar to the larger Great-tailed Grackle; male appears blacker than male Great-tailed Grackle, female has even paler underparts than female Great-tailed Grackle. Uncommon in Caño Negro region, where greatly outnumbered by Great-tailed Grackle. Inhabits riverbanks and borders of marshes. **Endemic to Nicaragua and northern CR.**

Yellow-tailed Oriole *Icterus mesomelas*

9 in (23 cm). **Yellow outer tail feathers and underside of tail** are diagnostic (compare with juvenile Black-cowled Oriole [p. 360]). Rare in Caribbean lowlands; to 1,000 ft (300 m). Dwells in thickets and dense second growth near water. Sought after as a cage bird for its beautiful voice; it whistles a variety of sweet, mellow, wren-like phrases.

Streak-backed Oriole *Icterus pustulatus*

8 in (20 cm). Similar to sympatric Spot-breasted Oriole, but has **streaked back** and no spotting on sides of breast. Fairly common in lowlands of northern Pacific; to 1,600 ft (500 m). Pairs forage in dry forest canopy, at forest edge, and in gardens. An unaccomplished vocalist; gives a dry wren-like rattle.

Spot-breasted Oriole *Icterus pectoralis*

9 in (23 cm). Distinguished from similar, sympatric Streak-backed Oriole by solid-black patch on upper back and distinct **spotting on sides of breast**. Uncommon in northern Pacific lowlands; to 1,600 ft (500 m). Found at forest edge and in gardens. Whistles slow, sweet phrases.

Great-tailed Grackle

Nicaraguan Grackle

Yellow-tailed Oriole

Spot-breasted Oriole

Streak-backed Oriole

Black-cowled Oriole *Icterus prosthemelas*

8 in (20 cm). Black-and-yellow pattern of adult is very distinctive. Juvenile resembles Yellow-tailed Oriole (p. 358) and juvenile Orchard Oriole, but has entirely black tail and no wing bars. Fairly common in Caribbean lowlands and foothills; to 4,300 ft (1,300 m). Recent scattered sightings (since 2003) in southern and central Pacific lowlands may indicate that range is expanding. Favors forest edge, second growth, and gardens. Whistles a series of soft, sweet notes.

Orchard Oriole *Icterus spurius*

7 in (18 cm). Male is distinctive. Juveniles resemble female, but are duller; juvenile male generally shows some black on throat. Female and juveniles distinguished from juvenile Black-cowled Oriole by **wing bars**; distinguished from both female and juvenile Baltimore Oriole by **bright-yellow underparts** and **green upperparts**. Common passage migrant from late July to Oct and from March to April, uncommon winter resident; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Feeds on flower nectar and fruit at forest edge and in gardens. Often in small groups.

Bullock's Oriole *Icterus bullockii*

8 in (20 cm). The large **white wing panel** and **black eye line** readily identify adult male. Female and juvenile are similar to juvenile Baltimore Oriole, but have **yellow sides of head, throat, and breast**. Casual migrant in northern Pacific, from Oct to March. Call similar to that of Baltimore Oriole.

Baltimore Oriole *Icterus galbula*

8 in (20 cm). **Black head** distinguishes adult male from other orange orioles; **orangish wash on breast** sets female and juvenile apart from somewhat similar female and juvenile Bullock's Oriole and female and juvenile Orchard Oriole. Common and widespread migrant, from early Sept to early May; to 7,200 ft (2,200 m). Feeds on flower nectar and fruit at forest edge and in gardens. Call is a harsh, dry chatter.

Yellow-billed Cacique *Amblycercus holosericeus*

9 in (23 cm). The combination of **yellow iris** and **pale-yellow bill** is unique among CR black birds (compare with Scarlet-rumped Cacique). Fairly common, virtually countrywide, except in northern Pacific lowlands; to timberline. Resides in dense thickets and tangles, where it is usually difficult to see. Behavior and vocalizations (clear, rich whistled song and harsh churring) are quite wren-like.

Scarlet-rumped Cacique *Cacicus uropygialis*

9 in (23 cm). The distinctive **scarlet rump** is usually concealed on perched birds; the **light-blue iris** further distinguishes it from the Yellow-billed Cacique. Common in wet lowlands and foothills on both Caribbean and Pacific slopes; to 3,600 ft (1,100 m). Two or more birds typically roam the middle and upper levels of mature wet forest, advanced second growth, and forest edge; accompanies mixed flocks. Frequently gives loud, ringing whistles.

[Displaying males of all three CR oropendola species produce bizarre gurgling and rasping noises. Oropendolas nest in colonies, generally preferring to construct nests in a single tree that is at some distance from nearby trees. The long, pendulous nest is distinctive and conspicuous. The female Giant Cowbird (p. 356) is a brood parasite—look for her near nesting oropendolas.]

Crested Oropendola *Psarocolius decumanus*

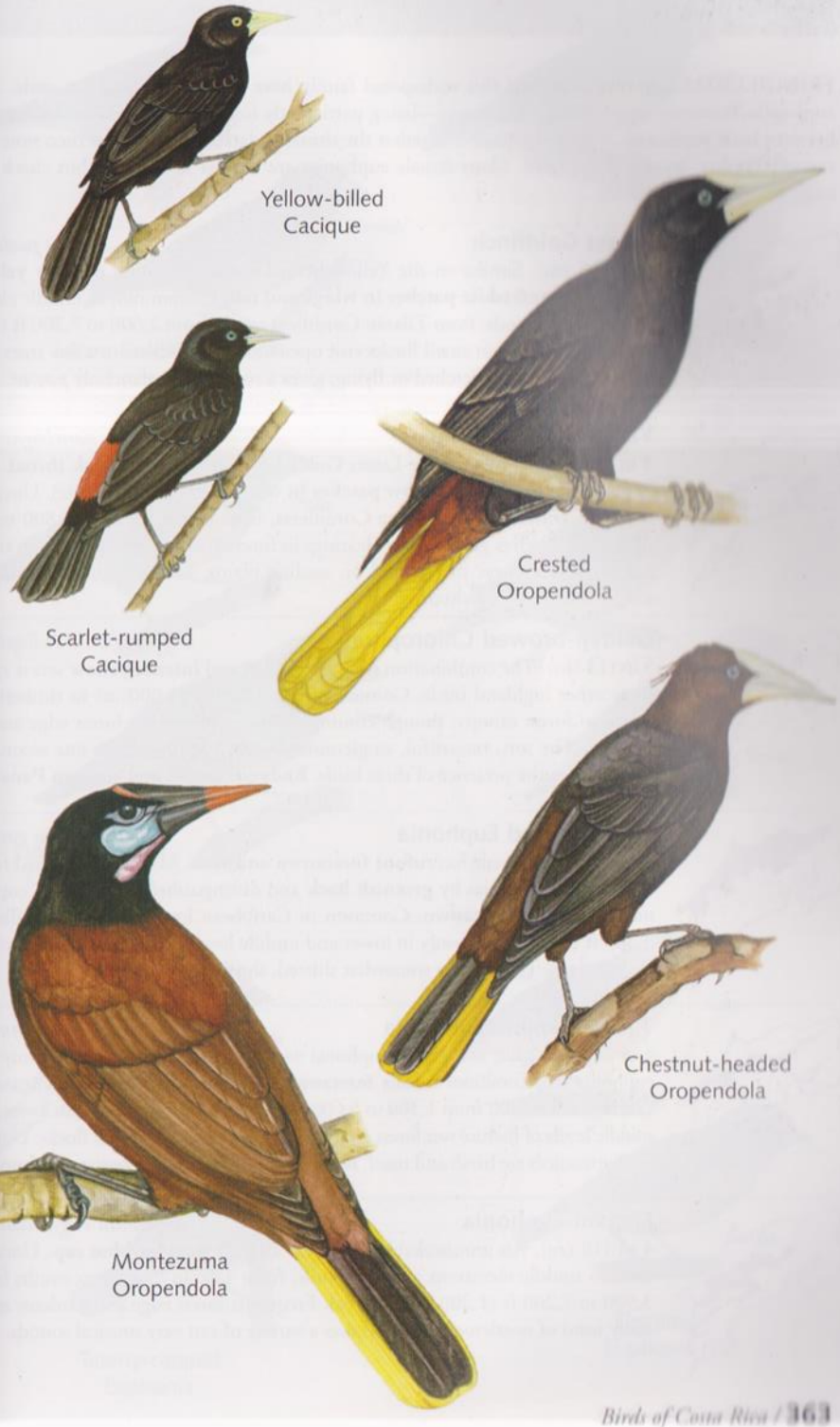
Male 17 in (43 cm); female 15 in (38 cm). Told apart from similar Chestnut-headed Oropendola by **all-black head**. Found only in a small area along the Panamanian border (near San Vito); first recorded in 1999 and likely still expanding its range. Uncommon; from 300 to 4,900 ft (100 to 1,500 m). Small flocks inhabit agricultural areas with scattered trees and forest fragments.

Chestnut-headed Oropendola *Psarocolius wagleri*

Male 14 in (36 cm); female 11 in (28 cm). Distinguished from the Montezuma Oropendola by its **pale bill, chestnut head**, and black wings. Also compare with Crested Oropendola. Uncommon in lowlands and middle elevations of Caribbean slope, rare in southern Pacific; to 5,600 ft (1,700 m). Favors forest and forest edge, where individuals or flocks forage noisily at middle and upper levels of canopy.

Montezuma Oropendola *Psarocolius montezuma*

Male 20 in (51 cm); female 16 in (41 cm). The only CR oropendola with **colorful facial markings** and **two-toned bill** (compare with Chestnut-headed Oropendola). Abundant in Caribbean lowlands; colonies are more thinly distributed at middle elevations of the Caribbean slope, in the Central Valley, and along Pacific slopes of northern cordilleras; to 4,900 ft (1,500 m). Flocks forage at all levels in forest, forest edge, and adjacent gardens.



FRINGILLIDAE. Most members of this widespread family have conical bills and eat seeds. The euphonias, however, are primarily fruit eaters—being particularly fond of mistletoe. To distinguish between male euphonias, it helps to observe whether the throat is dark or yellow, and then note the extent of yellow on top of the head. Many female euphonias are trickier to identify, but check the color on the head and belly.

Lesser Goldfinch *Spinus psaltria*

4 in (10 cm). Similar to the Yellow-bellied Siskin, but note **entirely yellow underparts** and **white patches in wings and tail**. Uncommon in middle elevations and highlands, from Tilarán Cordillera south; from 2,600 to 7,200 ft (800 to 2,200 m). Pairs or small flocks visit open areas with bushes or a few trees and feed on grass seeds. Perched or flying, gives a sweet but melancholy *psee-ee*.

Yellow-bellied Siskin *Spinus xanthogastrus*

4 in (10 cm). Similar to the Lesser Goldfinch, but male has **black throat and breast**; both sexes show **yellow patches in wings and tail** (not white). Uncommon in Central and Talamanca Cordilleras, from about 5,900 ft (1,800 m) to timberline. Prefers gardens and clearings in forested areas; perches high in trees, but often feeds near the ground on seeding plants. Call is high and scratchy; song is a high, thin twittering.

Golden-browed Chlorophonia *Chlorophonia callophrys*

5 in (13 cm). The combination of **bright green** and **intense yellow** sets it apart from other highland birds. Common from 3,300 ft (1,000 m) to timberline. Often in forest canopy, though coming down to eye level at forest edge and in gardens. The soft, mournful, single-note whistle—lasting about one second—alerts one to the presence of these birds. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**

Olive-backed Euphonia *Euphonia gouldi*

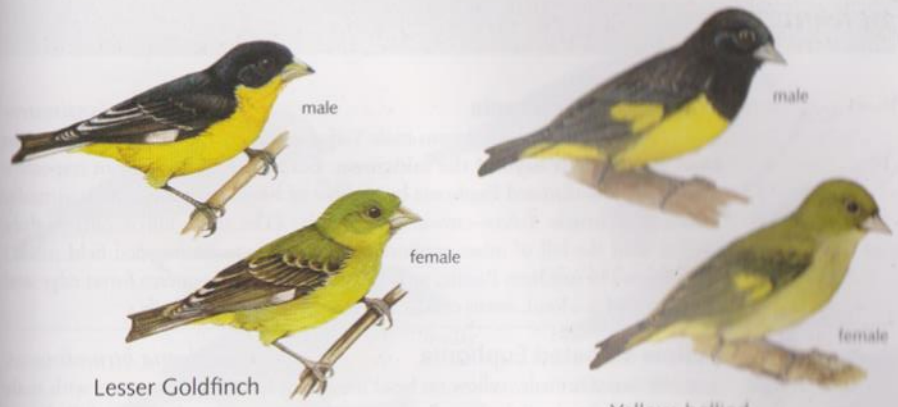
4 in (10 cm). Female has **rufous forecrown and vent**. Male distinguished from other male euphonias by **greenish back** and distinguished from female euphonias by **yellow forecrown**. Common in Caribbean lowlands and foothills; to 3,300 ft (1,000 m). Mostly in lower and middle levels of wet forest, forest edge, and gardens. The call is a somewhat slurred, shrill *shpreeah-shpree*.

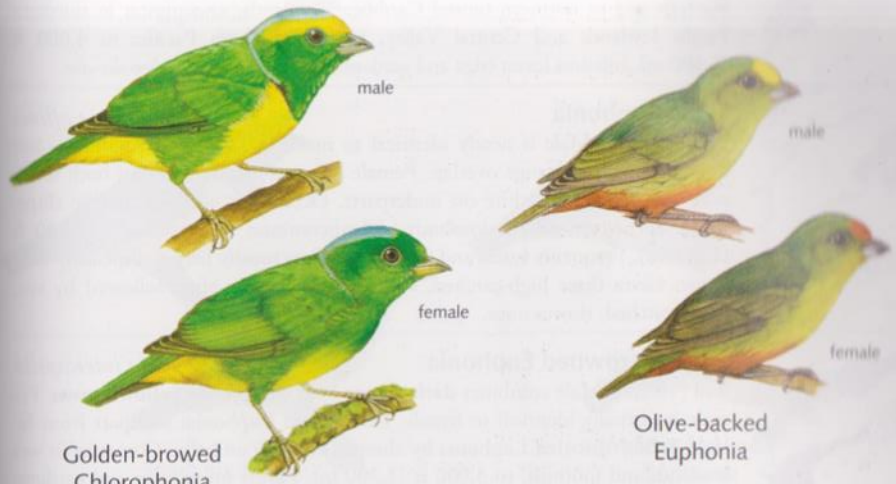
Tawny-capped Euphonia *Euphonia anneae*

4 in (10 cm). Male is only CR euphonia with a **tawny crown**; female is only CR euphonia that combines **rufous forecrown** with **gray underparts**. Common in Caribbean foothills; from 1,300 to 5,600 ft (400 to 1,700 m). Found in lower and middle levels of mature wet forest and forest edge; often with mixed flocks. Unmusical utterances are harsh and nasal. **Ranges from CR to northwestern Colombia.**

Elegant Euphonia *Euphonia elegantissima*

4 in (10 cm). An unmistakable bird with a lovely **powder-blue cap**. Uncommon in middle elevations and highlands, from Tilarán Cordillera south; from 3,900 to 7,200 ft (1,200 to 2,200 m). Frequents forest edge and gardens; especially fond of mistletoe berries. Makes a variety of not very musical sounds.





Thick-billed Euphonia *Euphonia laniirostris*

4 in (10 cm). Male set apart from male Yellow-throated Euphonia by **yellow on head that extends beyond the midcrown**. Both sexes set apart from respective sexes of Yellow-throated Euphonia by absence of white on belly. Female virtually identical to female Yellow-crowned Euphonia. (The thick bill is only slightly thicker than the bill of other euphonias—it is not a recommended field mark.) Uncommon in southern Pacific; to 3,600 ft (1,100 m). Frequents forest edge and gardens. Call is a loud, sweet *chwee*; also imitates other birds' calls.

Yellow-throated Euphonia *Euphonia hirundinacea*

4 in (10 cm). On male, yellow on head limited to forecrown (compare with male Thick-billed Euphonia). Female distinguished from female Thick-billed and Yellow-crowned Euphonias by **white on belly**. Common in northern Pacific foothills and in northern central Caribbean lowlands, uncommon in northern Pacific lowlands and Central Valley, rare in southern Pacific; to 4,600 ft (1,400 m). Inhabits forest edge and gardens. Call is a fairly fast *chee-dee-dee*.

Scrub Euphonia *Euphonia affinis*

4 in (10 cm). Male is nearly identical to male Spot-crowned Euphonia, but there is almost no range overlap. Female has **gray hindcrown**. In both sexes, note the absence of white on underparts. Occurs on northern Pacific slope, where fairly common in lowlands and uncommon in foothills; to 3,300 ft (1,000 m). Frequents forest and forest edge. Eats mostly berries, especially mistletoe. Gives three high-pitched, even-toned whistles, often followed by two lower-pitched, slower ones.

Yellow-crowned Euphonia *Euphonia luteicapilla*

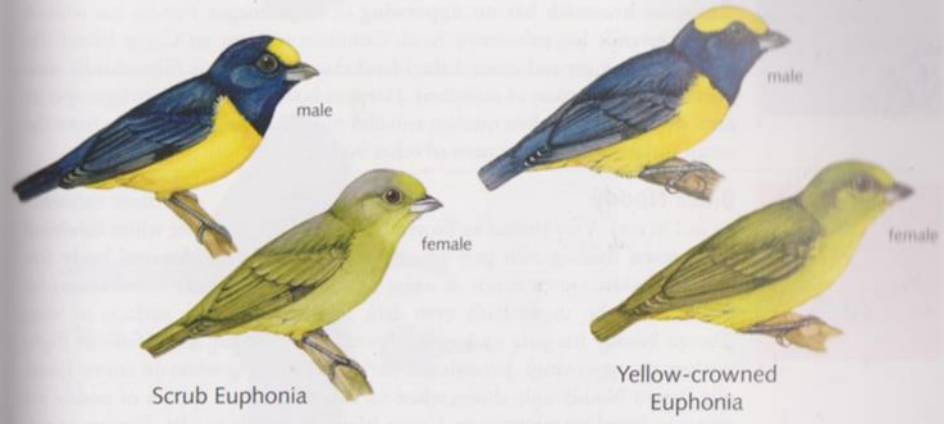
4 in (10 cm). Male combines **dark throat** with **completely yellow crown**. Female is virtually identical to female Thick-billed Euphonia; set apart from female Yellow-throated Euphonia by absence of white on belly. Common in wet lowlands and foothills; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Favors forest edge and gardens. Calls repeatedly from high in trees with a shrill two- or three-note whistle: *shee-shee-shee*. **Endemic from Nicaragua to Panama.**

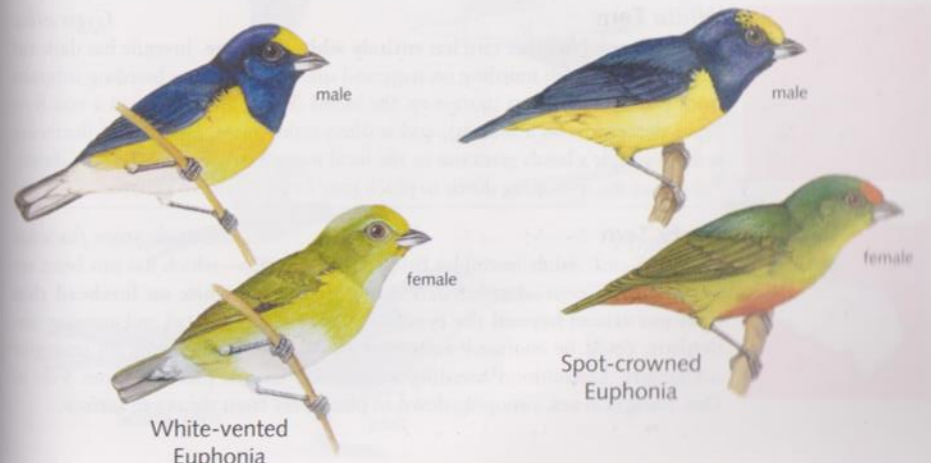
White-vented Euphonia *Euphonia minuta*

4 in (10 cm). Both sexes distinguished by **white belly and vent**. Uncommon in wet lowlands and foothills; to 3,900 ft (1,200 m). Prefers upper levels of mature forest and forest edge; wags tail constantly. Its vocalizations are a varied assortment of warbled notes and *chip* notes; not as conspicuous as many other euphonias.

Spot-crowned Euphonia *Euphonia imitans*

4 in (10 cm). Male is distinguished from the nearly identical male Scrub Euphonia by small crown spots, although these are difficult to see in the field. Fortunately, there is almost no range overlap. The female is the only euphonia in the southern Pacific with a **rufous forecrown and belly**. Uncommon in southern Pacific; to 4,600 ft (1,400 m). Forages at middle and upper levels of mature forest and advanced second growth. Produces rolling, buzzy utterances. **Endemic to CR and western Panama.**





Birds of Cocos Island

Cocos Island, or *Isla del Coco*, lies roughly 300 mi (500 km) southwest of the Costa Rican mainland. Although Cocos Island pertains to Costa Rica politically, it is biogeographically and geologically most closely related to the Galápagos Islands (with which it shares the same subspecies of Yellow Warbler).

Only thirteen of the more than 130 species reported from Cocos actually breed on the island or surrounding islets. North American passage migrants and pelagic wanderers comprise the bulk of the island's species list, with almost all of them being considered accidental, casual, or rare. In addition to the introduction of rats, cats, pigs, and White-tailed Deer, there have been some attempts to introduce birds. Of these, only Spot-breasted Oriole (p. 358) may actually have become established on the island.

While few birders ever manage to visit this remote site, it does have the allure of three endemic species. We include here eight species not treated in the main portion of the book that are likely to be encountered by visitors to Cocos Island. (Brown, Red-footed, Nazca, and Masked Boobies [p. 40], as well as Brown Noddy [p. 54] are also residents, at least seasonally.)

Great Frigatebird

Fregata minor

37 in (94 cm). Very similar to Magnificent Frigatebird (p. 38), but shows a distinctive **brownish bar on upperwing** in all plumages. Female has whitish throat; juvenile has pale-tawny head. Common resident on Cocos Island (far more common on and around the island than Magnificent Frigatebird); accidental off Pacific coast of mainland. Harasses boobies and other pelagic species until they relinquish their catches; will also pluck its own prey directly from the ocean surface and plunder nests of other birds.

Black Noddy

Anous minutus

14 in (36 cm). Very similar to Brown Noddy (p. 54), but note **white forehead and crown** shading into pale gray on nape, and purely **charcoal body** (on Brown Noddy, crown is not as white as forehead, and body shows brownish tones). In flight, shows fairly even dark coloration on both surfaces of wing (Brown Noddy has pale underwing coverts and pale bar across base of flight feathers on upperwing). Juvenile has dark nape abutting white on crown (juvenile Brown Noddy only shows white on forehead). Both species of noddy are common breeding migrants on Cocos Island from Feb to Oct. Forages at sea, swooping down to pluck prey from the ocean surface.

White Tern

Gygis alba

12 in (30 cm). No other tern has **entirely white plumage**. Juvenile has dark ear patch and brownish mottling on nape and mantle. Abundant breeding migrant from Feb to Sept. Nests in trees on the island (laying a single egg in a notch or slight depression on a branch), and is often rather tame. Its habit of fluttering around people's heads gives rise to the local name *Espíritu Santo* (Holy Ghost). Forages at sea, swooping down to pluck prey from the ocean surface.

Sooty Tern

Onychoprion fuscatus

17 in (43 cm). Adult resembles Bridled Tern (p. 52)—which has not been reported from Cocos—but has darker upperparts, and **white on forehead that does not extend beyond the eye**. Juvenile has blackish head and anterior underparts; could be confused with noddies, but always has white on posterior underparts. Uncommon breeding migrant on Cocos, probably from Feb to Oct. Forages at sea, swooping down to pluck prey from the ocean surface.

Cocos Cuckoo *Coccyzus ferrugineus*

13 in (33 cm). The only cuckoo known to occur on the island. Very similar to Mangrove Cuckoo (p. 174), but has **rufous wings**. Common resident, though rather furtive as it forages in dense vegetation for large insects and small lizards. Gives a throaty series of scratchy notes. **Endemic to Cocos Island.**

Cocos Flycatcher *Nesotriccus ridgwayi*

5 in (13 cm). A classic drab flycatcher with **two buffy wing bars**. (The only other flycatchers reported from Cocos are the accidental migrants Great Crested Flycatcher [p. 246], Eastern Kingbird [p. 252], and Eastern Phoebe [p. 380]—a CR record!) Common resident that can be found in almost all types of vegetation, usually at middle or upper levels, where it feeds on insects and fruit. Call is a fast, descending trill. **Endemic to Cocos Island.**

Yellow Warbler (Galapagos) *Setophaga petechia aureola*

5 in (13 cm). Similar to migrant Yellow Warblers (p. 294), which have occurred on the island as accidentals, but male has **rufous cap**; females of both migrant and Galapagos subspecies are virtually identical. Common resident that inhabits coastal vegetation, where it forages for insects. Warbles a fast, sweet phrase.

Cocos Finch *Pinaroloxias inornata*

5 in (13 cm). The **pointed, slightly curved bill** should distinguish this species from any similarly plumaged finch-type bird that might accidentally turn up on the island. Juvenile resembles adult female, but has yellow bill. The most abundant of the island's resident land birds and found in essentially all habitats, though generally at lower and middle levels. As a species, it exploits a wide range of foraging opportunities on the island, gleaning and probing all plant surfaces (leaves, stems, bark, and flowers) for insects, as well as turning over small stones and fallen leaves; it also eats fruit and drinks nectar. However, any given individual typically only uses one or a few foraging techniques. Quite tame. Has a variety of calls. **Endemic to Cocos Island.**

Rarities

The following fifty-six species are considered to be rarities either because they are known from only one or two reports, they have not been reliably reported in more than twenty years, or they are uncommon pelagic species. The species follow the order of the eBird/Clements Checklist of Birds of the World: Version 6.8. Note that only birds reported from mainland Costa Rica are illustrated.

White-faced Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna viduata*
17 in (43 cm). Has distinctive white face and crown; shows all-dark wings and tail in flight. Has not been seen in CR in more than 25 years, though perhaps possible in Palo Verde NP region.

Comb Duck *Sarkidiornis melanotos*
Male 28 in (71 cm); female 22 in (56 cm). White head flecked with black is distinctive. Potentially confused with domestic Muscovy Ducks (p. 32) that have extensive white plumage, but note lack of white in wing. A male was seen and photographed at Palo Verde NP (March 2010).

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*
23 in (58 cm). Female is much larger than other similarly plumaged CR species and has an orange bill with a dark spot on the upper mandible. Breeding male's dark-green head is similar to that of Northern Shoveler (p. 34), but note bright-yellow bill and narrow white collar. No confirmed reports since 1951.

White-cheeked Pintail *Anas bahamensis*
18 in (46 cm). A brownish duck with white cheeks and throat; dark bill has reddish patch at base. A female was photographed on the shore at Cocos Island (Aug 2010).

Canvasback *Aythya valisineria*
21 in (53 cm). All plumages are very similar to respective plumages of Redhead (p. 373). Note all-dark bill that slopes down, forming a straight line from the top of the crown to the tip of the bill. In flight, essentially no contrast between flight feathers and wing coverts. One individual photographed at the Cachí Reservoir (Dec 2011).

Redhead *Aythya americana*
19 in (48 cm). All plumages are very similar to respective plumages of Canvasback (p. 372), but note the pale bill with black tip and the rounded head that gives a more "typical" duck profile. Brownish female and juvenile lack the more obvious white facial markings of Lesser Scaup and Ring-necked Duck (p. 32). In flight, pale-gray flight feathers contrast with darker wing coverts. One individual photographed in the Comunidad catfish ponds, and another found a few days later at Pelón de la Bajura (Nov 2011).

Greater Scaup *Aythya marila*
18 in (46 cm). Nearly identical to Lesser Scaup and similar to Ring-necked Duck (p. 32). Male and female best identified in flight by white wing stripe extending from body to middle of primaries. One sighting of three birds in Gulf of Papagayo (Oct 1974). Most likely to be found on saltwater.

Hooded Merganser *Lophodytes cucullatus*
18 in (46 cm). The long, thin bill and pale iris could recall a grebe (p. 30), but note the long tail. The crest feathers protruding behind the nape are distinctive. One juvenile male photographed at Laguna Pocosol (Jan 2012). Very likely the same individual returned the following season, as that lone bird was an adult male.

Eared Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*
13 in (33 cm). Differentiated from the other two CR grebes (p. 30) by red eye and thin, slightly upturned bill. A single CR record of two birds in breeding plumage on a glacial lake atop Mount Chirripó (April 1987).

Waved Albatross *Phoebastria irrorata*
35 in (89 cm). With a 7.5-foot (230 cm) wingspan, not likely to be mistaken for any other type of seabird. The only albatross to be expected in CR Pacific waters, it has a mostly white head and breast and a massive, yellow bill. A single bird was observed flying low over the water about a kilometer from Cocos Island (May 1993).

Black-capped Petrel *Pterodroma hasitata*
16 in (41 cm). This boldly patterned petrel is easily identified by its white nape and rump. One sighting of a single bird off the northern Caribbean coast (Aug 1953).

Galapagos Petrel *Pterodroma phaeopygia*
17 in (43 cm). Apart from white forehead, upperparts are quite dark. White underparts usually show dark smudge on flanks. A bird was collected southwest of Cabo Blanco (March 1935). An individual was photographed halfway between mainland CR and Cocos Island (May 2009).

Tahiti Petrel *Pseudobulweria rostrata*
15 in (38 cm). The only petrel/shearwater likely in CR waters that shows a dark-brown head and breast contrasting with otherwise white underparts (underwing is mostly dark). Has a fairly heavy, black bill. Five sightings of individuals over deep water in Pacific Ocean (Sept 2009).

Parkinson's Petrel *Procellaria parkinsoni*
18 in (46 cm). Heavily built and uniformly dark brown; the diagnostic feature is the creamy yellow bill with dark-edged segments. Uncommon over deep water in Pacific Ocean, from March to Sept; usually seen singly.

Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea*
19 in (48 cm). Has brownish upperparts and white underparts; dull-yellow bill with dark tip. Known from two moribund birds found in the surf at Tortuguero (March 2003 and Dec 2004).

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*
17 in (43 cm). An all-dark bird except for pale patches on underwing; bill black. Formerly considered a "common to abundant visitor" off the Pacific coast from May to Oct, but recent pelagic trips have not encountered this species, apart from two birds seen at Cocos Island (late April 2005). Could also occur in Caribbean waters.

Short-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus tenuirostris*
16 in (41 cm). Very similar to Sooty Shearwater, but most individuals have dark underwings. The feet usually protrude beyond tail in flight. One sighting in Pacific waters (July 1978).

Christmas Shearwater *Puffinus nativitatis*
14 in (36 cm). Smaller than, but otherwise very similar to, previous two species, though underwing intermediate in paleness. Tail short and rounded in comparison with dark-morph Wedge-tailed Shearwater (p. 44). One bird photographed in Pacific waters (April 2009).

Black-vented Shearwater *Puffinus opisthomelas*
14 in (36 cm). Brownish upperparts are not sharply demarcated from white underparts; has dark vent. One bird photographed around a shrimp trawler near Caño Island (Nov 2008).

Audubon's Shearwater *Puffinus lherminieri*
12 in (30 cm). Virtually identical to Galapagos Shearwater (p. 44), with which formerly considered conspecific, but should show white eye ring. Audubon's occurs in the Caribbean while Galapagos occurs only in the Pacific.

White-faced Storm-Petrel *Pelagodroma marina*
8 in (20 cm). The white superciliary and white underparts make this an easy storm-petrel to identify. Two reports from the vicinity of Cocos Island, both in May (years uncited).

Markham's Storm-Petrel *Oceanodroma markhami*
9 in (23 cm). Very similar to Black Storm-Petrel (p. 42), but the pale bar across the upperwing extends to leading edge of the wing and is more pronounced. Four records, well out to sea in Pacific waters, from July to Sept (years uncited).

White-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon lepturus*
15 in (38 cm), plus tail streamers up to 16 in (41 cm) long. Adult has yellow-orange bill and broad black stripe across inner portion of upperwing. Juvenile has coarsely scalloped upperparts and lacks black on nape (see Red-billed Tropicbird [p. 38]). Two sightings of a lone adult off Cocos Island (Jan and Feb 1994); an adult was photographed flying over Tortuguero (April 2013).

Red-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon rubricauda*
18 in (46 cm), plus tail streamers up to 14 in (35 cm) long. The adult's red tail streamers are definitive. Juvenile has very little black in outer primaries. One adult photographed off Cocos Island (Feb 2011).

Maguari Stork *Ciconia maguari*
47 in (119 cm). The long bill and legs should immediately suggest a stork. The reddish legs and feathered white head distinguish it from the two local storks (p. 66). One adult photographed in shrimp ponds at Chomes (Sept 2013).

White-faced Ibis *Plegadis chihi*
23 in (58 cm). Nearly identical to Glossy Ibis (p. 64), but adult has red iris and reddish skin on face; juvenile is basically indistinguishable from Glossy Ibis. Known from one specimen taken in the Térraba Valley in the late 1800s.

Ruddy Crake *Laterallus ruber*
6 in (15 cm). Distinguished by combination of unbarred rufous underparts, dark-gray hood, black bill, and olive-green legs. Known in CR from two birds seen near a marsh between Miravalles Volcano and Tenorio Volcano (May 1955). Makes a whinnying churr similar to that of the White-throated Crake (p. 88).

Pacific Golden-Plover *Pluvialis fulva*
10 in (25 cm). Very similar to American Golden-Plover (p. 68), but adult in breeding plumage has white line extending down flanks to undertail coverts. Nonbreeding adult and juvenile have warmer golden-buff tone to face (and edging of mantle and scapular feathers) than do corresponding plumages of American Golden-Plover. A bird in nonbreeding plumage was photographed at Chomes (Sept 2007).

Piping Plover *Charadrius melodus*
7 in (18 cm). In all plumages, a very pale plover with orange-yellow legs and a stubby bill, recalling a washed-out Semipalmated Plover (p. 70). Pale appearance could also suggest a Snowy Plover (p. 70), but that species has dark legs. A bird in nonbreeding plumage was photographed walking on exposed rocks along the shore at Playa Avellanas (Nov 2009).

Hudsonian Godwit *Limosa haemastica*
15 in (38 cm). The long, slightly upturned bill distinguishes it from all but the Marbled Godwit and American Avocet (p. 72), but none of the three share similar plumage. In flight, in all plumages, shows black underwing and tail, as well as white tail base and wing stripe. One CR record at a coastal lagoon near Puntarenas (May 1975).

Ruff *Calidris pugnax*
Male 11 in (28 cm); female 9 in (23 cm). Plumage, leg, and bill color vary with age and sex; somewhat resembles a plump yellowlegs (p. 74), though it has a short bill. Best identified in flight by white V on uppertail coverts; also has relatively deep, slow wingbeats for a shorebird. Two records from Chomes, in early Sept and late May (years uncited).

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*
8 in (20 cm). In nonbreeding plumage, recalls a Dunlin (p. 80), but has thinner, more decurved bill and, in flight, shows white uppertail coverts and wing stripe. First recorded in Colorado, on the Gulf of Nicoya, in early Nov (year uncited); second sighting was in rice fields at Pelón de la Bajura (Nov 2007).

Red Phalarope *Phalaropus fulicarius*
8 in (20 cm). In nonbreeding plumage, very similar to Red-necked Phalarope (p. 82), but has unstreaked gray back; the bill is also somewhat shorter and thicker. In flight, the underwing is mostly pale (underwing of Red-necked Phalarope has dark leading edge). Uncommon well offshore in Pacific Ocean, from Sept to April.

Long-tailed Jaeger *Stercorarius longicaudus*
15 in (38 cm), plus elongated central tail feathers up to 8 in (20 cm) long. Breeding adult identified by combination of long tail, pale breast, and dark trailing edge on upperwing. In all plumages, shows just two or three white shafts on upperside of outer primaries. Rare migrant off Pacific coast; one specimen from Gulf of Papagayo in April (year uncited) and one photographed at sea (April 2009); three additional sight reports in Pacific Ocean (April 2005, Sept 2009, and Nov 2010).

Swallow-tailed Gull *Creagrus furcatus*
22 in (56 cm). Striking wing pattern is reminiscent of the much smaller Sabine's Gull (p. 48), but white on upperwing is more extensive, covering the middle third of the leading edge. Breeding adult has red eye ring and feet and white spot at base of upper and lower mandibles. At least a seasonal visitor to CR waters, usually well offshore in Pacific waters. Sixteen known sightings, all between March and May, mostly of birds approaching vessels at night; some birds have been seen perched in daylight at Cocos Island. Forages nocturnally for squid and fish.

Black-legged Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*
17 in (43 cm). Nonbreeding adult distinguished by combination of dark ear spot, grayish wash on hindcrown and nape, and unmarked, yellowish bill; in flight, shows black wingtip. Juvenile has dark ear spot, black nuchal collar, dark bill, and, in flight, shows bold black inverted V across upperwing. An adult in nonbreeding plumage was photographed on the beach at Tortuguero (March 2009).

Bonaparte's Gull *Chroicocephalus philadelphia*
13 in (33 cm). The key feature in all ages is the slender black bill. In flight, adult shows black tips to white primaries; juvenile has black along entire trailing edge of wing. Small size and graceful flight suggest a tern. Casual winter visitor to Pacific coast with four sightings: Golfo Dulce (May 1977), Chomes (Dec 1978 and Jan 1980), and Playa Potrero (Jan 2013).

Gray-hooded Gull *Chroicocephalus cirrocephalus*
17 in (43 cm). Handsome adult is quite distinctive with gray hood, pale iris, and red legs and bill. In flight, all ages show a small white window on underwing in middle of dark primary tips. A South American species; one adult was photographed on Cocos Island (Feb 2011).

Gray Gull *Leucophaeus modestus*
18 in (46 cm). A dark gull varying from grayish brown in juvenile plumage to leaden in adult plumage. All ages show white trailing edge on wing in flight. A South American species known in CR from one sighting on Cocos Island (May 1925).

California Gull *Larus californicus*
21 in (53 cm). Decidedly larger than a Laughing Gull or Ring-billed Gull, but not as large as a Herring Gull (p. 48). In flight, first- and second-winter birds told apart from Herring Gull by dark primaries. All ages have dark iris. A bird in second-winter plumage was photographed at Tárcoles (March 2013).

Large-billed Tern *Phaetusa simplex*
14 in (36 cm). Stout, yellow bill and gray, white, and black upperparts are unique. Known from one bird photographed on Tortuguero River (March 2003). A second report came from near Matina (June 2007).

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*
12 in (30 cm). Very similar to Common Tern (p. 52), best told apart in flight by pale-gray upperwing (Common Tern shows dark in outer primaries). Four birds observed feeding with dolphins well out to sea from Quepos (Nov 2004).

Great Horned Owl *Bubo virginianus*
20 in (51 cm). Combination of dark ear tufts, tawny facial disk, and barred underparts is unique among CR owls. Very rare; known from Central Valley and northern Pacific, though no recent reports. Apparently prefers to roost in (and hunt from) dense trees near open areas. Call is an archetypal *hu-hoo, hooo, hooo.*

Burrowing Owl *Athene cunicularia*
9 in (23 cm). A pale-brown, round-headed, long-legged terrestrial owl. Known from one specimen found north of Cartago, on the slopes of Irazú Volcano (Dec 1900), and a possible sighting from the northern Pacific lowlands in the 1980s; a photograph of an individual perched on a fence post was reportedly taken along the road to Rincón de la Vieja NP (2005), but details are unconfirmed.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*
15 in (38 cm). In size, color, and pattern, somewhat similar to Striped Owl (p. 116), but has very short ear tufts and very fine streaking below. Known from two specimens taken near San José (Dec 1863 and Dec 1916).

Rufous-crested Coquette *Lophornis delattrei*
3 in (8 cm). Male has long orange crest feathers, female has orange forehead; both sexes have dull-greenish bellies. Known in CR from four male specimens taken in San Pedro (east of San José) between 1892 and 1906, all in October. No recent records.

White-bellied Emerald *Amazilia candida*
4 in (10 cm). Both sexes show pinkish lower mandible with black tip, and bronze-green tail with dark subterminal band; female distinguished from male by white tail corners. Easily confused with female Mangrove Hummingbird (p. 152), but the latter has mostly dark tail. Possibly confused with female Ruby-throated Hummingbird (p. 152), but that species has all-black bill and white postocular spot. Very rare or perhaps casual migrant from northern Central America. Known from four old records: San José, Coronado de Térraba, Puerto Jiménez, and near Turrialba (years uncited).

Orange-breasted Falcon *Falco deiroleucus*
Male 13 in (33 cm); female 15 in (38 cm). Bat Falcons (p. 112) with pale-rufous throats are often incorrectly identified as Orange-breasted Falcons, but the latter species always shows white throat above rufous breast, and dark midsection has coarse, white, scalloped barring. No valid reports since the late 1950s; the few records are all from the foothills and middle elevations of the Caribbean slope.

Eastern Phoebe *Sayornis phoebe*
7 in (18 cm). Overall appearance brings to mind a wood-pewee (p. 240) or an *Empidonax* flyctacher (p. 242), but note all-dark bill and lack of eye ring. A bird was photographed on Cocos Island (March 2013). Has habit of pumping tail up and down, typically uses low, exposed perches.

Vermilion Flycatcher *Pyrocephalus rubinus*
6 in (15 cm). Adult male's red crown and underparts render it unmistakable. Adult female and juvenile have white throat, thin white superciliary, and white breast with faint dusky streaking. Vent is tinged pale orange in adult female, yellowish in juvenile. An adult male was photographed in a citrus plantation east of La Cruz, Guanacaste (Aug 2011). Pumps tail like a phoebe.

Ash-throated Flycatcher *Myiarchus cinerascens*
7 in (18 cm). A very pale *Myiarchus*, with a proportionately shorter and slimmer bill than the Great Crested Flycatcher (p. 246). Known from one record from near Ciudad Quesada (March 1934) and a more recent report from Punta Uva (Oct 2001).

American Pipit *Anthus rubescens*
7 in (18 cm). Has brown, faintly streaked upperparts and pale-buffy underparts with brown streaking on breast and flanks. Somewhat similarly colored Swainson's and Gray-cheeked Thrushes (p. 268) have spotting, not streaking, on breast. One bird was photographed on Cocos Island (May 2006), and there is a report of a bird from near the mouth of the Tárcoles River, with blurry photos (Jan 2005). Walks on ground in open areas, frequently wagging its tail. [Note: Yellowish Pipit (*Anthus lutescens*) occurs in western Panama and could eventually be found in CR. It is smaller, 5 in (13 cm), and has obvious streaking on upperparts. Both species have white outer tail feathers.]

Grassland Yellow-Finch *Sicalis luteola*
5 in (13 cm). No other small seedeater-type bird combines bright-yellow underparts and a streaked back. The only records consist of several sightings in early May 1955, on the southwestern flank of Miravalles Volcano. Could appear in open country of Pacific lowlands.

Lined Seedeater *Sporophila lineola*
5 in (13 cm). Male is somewhat similar to the male of the Pacific race of Variable Seedeater (p. 328), but has white crown stripe and large white malar stripe. Female is nearly identical to female Variable Seedeater, but has yellowish bill. A male was photographed among a group of Variable and White-collared Seedeaters in a rice field at Playa del Rey (Oct 2013).

Savannah Sparrow *Passerculus sandwichensis*
5 in (13 cm). Somewhat variable throughout its North American range, but has white underparts with brown streaking on breast, sides of throat, and flanks. Usually shows yellowish lores and a notched tail. Originally added to the CR list based on a bird seen on Cocos Island (April 1963). A second bird was photographed in scrub east of Bagatzi, near Palo Verde NP (Feb 2013), and a bird was photographed between Bebedero and Colorado (Oct 2013).

Yellow-headed Blackbird *Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*
10 in (25 cm). Male has bright-yellow head and breast, white patch in wing, and otherwise black body. In female and juvenile, black is replaced with brown, and white in wing is reduced or absent. A casual winter resident, from Dec to March; no recent reports from mainland, though photographed on Cocos Island (Oct 2010). Possible in freshwater marshes of Palo Verde NP and Caño Negro regions. Utters a harsh croak.

Checklist of the Birds of Costa Rica

This list conforms to the order of the eBird/Clements Checklist of Birds of the World: Version 6.8.

Tinamous (5)	**Tinamidae**	
Highland Tinamou	*Nothocercus bonapartei*	
Great Tinamou	*Tinamus major*	
Little Tinamou	*Crypturellus soui*	
Slaty-breasted Tinamou	*Crypturellus boucardi*	
Thicket Tinamou	*Crypturellus cinnamomeus*	

Ducks (21)	**Anatidae**	
White-faced Whistling-Duck	*Dendrocygna viduata*	
Black-bellied Whistling-Duck	*Dendrocygna autumnalis*	
Fulvous Whistling-Duck	*Dendrocygna bicolor*	
Comb Duck	*Sarkidiornis melanotos*	
Muscovy Duck	*Cairina moschata*	
American Wigeon	*Anas americana*	
Mallard	*Anas platyrhynchos*	
Blue-winged Teal	*Anas discors*	
Cinnamon Teal	*Anas cyanoptera*	
Northern Shoveler	*Anas clypeata*	
White-cheeked Pintail	*Anas bahamensis*	
Northern Pintail	*Anas acuta*	
Green-winged Teal	*Anas crecca*	
Canvasback	*Aythya valisineria*	
Redhead	*Aythya americana*	
Ring-necked Duck	*Aythya collaris*	
Greater Scaup	*Aythya marila*	
Lesser Scaup	*Aythya affinis*	
Hooded Merganser	*Lophodytes cucullatus*	
Masked Duck	*Nomonyx dominicus*	
Ruddy Duck	*Oxyura jamaicensis*	

Curassows, Chachalacas, Guans (5)	**Cracidae**	
Plain Chachalaca	*Ortalis vetula*	
Gray-headed Chachalaca	*Ortalis cinereiceps*	
Crested Guan	*Penelope purpurascens*	

Black Guan	*Chamaepetes unicolor*	
Great Curassow	*Crax rubra*	

New World Quail (7)	**Odontophoridae**	
Buffy-crowned Wood-Partridge	*Dendrortyx leucophrys*	
Crested Bobwhite	*Colinus cristatus*	
Marbled Wood-Quail	*Odontophorus gujanensis*	
Black-eared Wood-Quail	*Odontophorus melanotis*	
Black-breasted Wood-Quail	*Odontophorus leucolaemus*	
Spotted Wood-Quail	*Odontophorus guttatus*	
Tawny-faced Quail	*Rhynchortyx cinctus*	

Grebes (3)	**Podicipedidae**	
Least Grebe	*Tachybaptus dominicus*	
Pied-billed Grebe	*Podilymbus podiceps*	
Eared Grebe	*Podiceps nigricollis*	

Albatrosses (1)	**Diomedeidae**	
Waved Albatross	*Phoebastria irrorata*	

Shearwaters (13)	**Procellariidae**	
Black-capped Petrel	*Pterodroma hasitata*	
Galapagos Petrel	*Pterodroma phaeopygia*	
Tahiti Petrel	*Pseudobulweria rostrata*	
Parkinson's Petrel	*Procellaria parkinsoni*	
Cory's Shearwater	*Calonectris diomedea*	
Pink-footed Shearwater	*Puffinus creatopus*	
Wedge-tailed Shearwater	*Puffinus pacificus*	
Sooty Shearwater	*Puffinus griseus*	
Short-tailed Shearwater	*Puffinus tenuirostris*	
Christmas Shearwater	*Puffinus nativitatis*	
Galapagos Shearwater	*Puffinus subalaris*	
Black-vented Shearwater	*Puffinus opisthomelas*	
Audubon's Shearwater	*Puffinus lherminieri*	

Storm-Petrels (8)	**Hydrobatidae**	
Wilson's Storm-Petrel	*Oceanites oceanicus*	
White-faced Storm-Petrel	*Pelagodroma marina*	
Leach's Storm-Petrel	*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*	
Band-rumped Storm-Petrel	*Oceanodroma castro*	

Wedge-rumped Storm-Petrel	*Oceanodroma tethys*	
Black Storm-Petrel	*Oceanodroma melania*	
Markham's Storm-Petrel	*Oceanodroma markhami*	
Least Storm-Petrel	*Oceanodroma microsoma*	

Tropicbirds (3)	**Phaethontidae**	
White-tailed Tropicbird	*Phaethon lepturus*	
Red-billed Tropicbird	*Phaethon aethereus*	
Red-tailed Tropicbird	*Phaethon rubricauda*	

Storks (3)	**Ciconiidae**	
Maguari Stork	*Ciconia maguari*	
Jabiru	*Jabiru mycteria*	
Wood Stork	*Mycteria americana*	

Frigatebirds (2)	**Fregatidae**	
Magnificent Frigatebird	*Fregata magnificens*	
Great Frigatebird	*Fregata minor*	

Boobies (5)	**Sulidae**	
Masked Booby	*Sula dactylatra*	
Nazca Booby	*Sula granti*	
Blue-footed Booby	*Sula nebouxii*	
Brown Booby	*Sula leucogaster*	
Red-footed Booby	*Sula sula*	

Cormorants (1)	**Phalacrocoracidae**	
Neotropic Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*	

Anhingas (1)	**Anhingidae**	
Anhinga	*Anhinga anhinga*	

Pelicans (2)	**Pelecanidae**	
American White Pelican	*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*	
Brown Pelican	*Pelecanus occidentalis*	

Herons, Egrets, Bitterns (19)	**Ardeidae**	
Pinnated Bittern	*Botaurus pinnatus*	
American Bittern	*Botaurus lentiginosus*	
Least Bittern	*Ixobrychus exilis*	
Rufescent Tiger-Heron	*Tigrisoma lineatum*	
Fasciated Tiger-Heron	*Tigrisoma fasciatum*	

Bare-throated Tiger-Heron	*Tigrisoma mexicanum*	
Great Blue Heron	*Ardea herodias*	
Great Egret	*Ardea alba*	
Snowy Egret	*Egretta thula*	
Little Blue Heron	*Egretta caerulea*	
Tricolored Heron	*Egretta tricolor*	
Reddish Egret	*Egretta rufescens*	
Cattle Egret	*Bubulcus ibis*	
Green Heron	*Butorides virescens*	
Striated Heron	*Butorides striata*	
Agami Heron	*Agamia agami*	
Black-crowned Night-Heron	*Nycticorax nycticorax*	
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	*Nyctanassa violacea*	
Boat-billed Heron	*Cochlearius cochlearius*	

Ibises, Spoonbills (5)	**Threskiornithidae**	
White Ibis	*Eudocimus albus*	
Glossy Ibis	*Plegadis falcinellus*	
White-faced Ibis	*Plegadis chihi*	
Green Ibis	*Mesembrinibis cayennensis*	
Roseate Spoonbill	*Platalea ajaja*	

New World Vultures (4)	**Cathartidae**	
Black Vulture	*Coragyps atratus*	
Turkey Vulture	*Cathartes aura*	
Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture	*Cathartes burrovianus*	
King Vulture	*Sarcoramphus papa*	

Osprey (1)	**Pandionidae**	
Osprey	*Pandion haliaetus*	

Hawks, Kites, Eagles (39)	**Accipitridae**	
Pearl Kite	*Gampsonyx swainsonii*	
White-tailed Kite	*Elanus leucurus*	
Hook-billed Kite	*Chondrohierax uncinatus*	
Gray-headed Kite	*Leptodon cayanensis*	
Swallow-tailed Kite	*Elanoides forficatus*	
Crested Eagle	*Morphnus guianensis*	
Harpy Eagle	*Harpia harpyja*	
Black Hawk-Eagle	*Spizaetus tyrannus*	

Ornate Hawk-Eagle	*Spizaetus ornatus*	
Black-and-white Hawk-Eagle	*Spizaetus melanoleucus*	
Black-collared Hawk	*Busarellus nigricollis*	
Snail Kite	*Rostrhamus sociabilis*	
Double-toothed Kite	*Harpagus bidentatus*	
Mississippi Kite	*Ictinia mississippiensis*	
Plumbeous Kite	*Ictinia plumbea*	
Northern Harrier	*Circus cyaneus*	
Gray-bellied Hawk	*Accipiter poliogaster*	
Tiny Hawk	*Accipiter superciliosus*	
Sharp-shinned Hawk	*Accipiter striatus*	
Cooper's Hawk	*Accipiter cooperii*	
Bicolored Hawk	*Accipiter bicolor*	
Crane Hawk	*Geranospiza caerulescens*	
Common Black-Hawk	*Buteogallus anthracinus*	
Savanna Hawk	*Buteogallus meridionalis*	
Great Black-Hawk	*Buteogallus urubitinga*	
Solitary Eagle	*Buteogallus solitarius*	
Barred Hawk	*Morphnarchus princeps*	
Roadside Hawk	*Rupornis magnirostris*	
Harris's Hawk	*Parabuteo unicinctus*	
White-tailed Hawk	*Geranoaetus albicaudatus*	
White Hawk	*Pseudastur albicollis*	
Semiplumbeous Hawk	*Leucopternis semiplumbeus*	
Broad-winged Hawk	*Buteo platypterus*	
Gray Hawk	*Buteo plagiatus*	
Gray-lined Hawk	*Buteo nitidus*	
Short-tailed Hawk	*Buteo brachyurus*	
Swainson's Hawk	*Buteo swainsoni*	
Zone-tailed Hawk	*Buteo albonotatus*	
Red-tailed Hawk	*Buteo jamaicensis*	

Sunbittern (1)	**Eurypygidae**	
Sunbittern	*Eurypyga helias*	

Rails, Crakes, Gallinules (16)	**Rallidae**	
Ocellated Crake	*Micropygia schomburgkii*	
Ruddy Crake	*Laterallus ruber*	
White-throated Crake	*Laterallus albigularis*	
Gray-breasted Crake	*Laterallus exilis*	

Black Rail	*Laterallus jamaicensis*	
Clapper Rail	*Rallus longirostris*	
Rufous-necked Wood-Rail	*Aramides axillaris*	
Gray-necked Wood-Rail	*Aramides cajaneus*	
Uniform Crake	*Amaurolimnas concolor*	
Sora	*Porzana carolina*	
Yellow-breasted Crake	*Porzana flaviventer*	
Paint-billed Crake	*Neocrex erythrops*	
Spotted Rail	*Pardirallus maculatus*	
Purple Gallinule	*Porphyrio martinicus*	
Common Gallinule	*Gallinula galeata*	
American Coot	*Fulica americana*	

Sungrebe (1)	**Heliornithidae**	
Sungrebe	*Heliornis fulica*	

Limpkin (1)	**Aramidae**	
Limpkin	*Aramus guarauna*	

Thick-knees (1)	**Burhinidae**	
Double-striped Thick-knee	*Burhinus bistriatus*	

Stilts, Avocets (2)	**Recurvirostridae**	
Black-necked Stilt	*Himantopus mexicanus*	
American Avocet	*Recurvirostra americana*	

Oystercatchers (1)	**Haematopodidae**	
American Oystercatcher	*Haematopus palliatus*	

Plovers, Lapwings (10)	**Charadriidae**	
Black-bellied Plover	*Pluvialis squatarola*	
American Golden-Plover	*Pluvialis dominica*	
Pacific Golden-Plover	*Pluvialis fulva*	
Southern Lapwing	*Vanellus chilensis*	
Collared Plover	*Charadrius collaris*	
Snowy Plover	*Charadrius nivosus*	
Wilson's Plover	*Charadrius wilsonia*	
Semipalmated Plover	*Charadrius semipalmatus*	
Piping Plover	*Charadrius melodus*	
Killdeer	*Charadrius vociferus*	

Jacanas (2)	**Jacanidae**	
Northern Jacana	*Jacana spinosa*	
Wattled Jacana	*Jacana jacana*	

Sandpipers, Allies (32)	**Scolopacidae**	
Spotted Sandpiper	*Actitis macularius*	
Solitary Sandpiper	*Tringa solitaria*	
Wandering Tattler	*Tringa incana*	
Greater Yellowlegs	*Tringa melanoleuca*	
Willet	*Tringa semipalmata*	
Lesser Yellowlegs	*Tringa flavipes*	
Upland Sandpiper	*Bartramia longicauda*	
Whimbrel	*Numenius phaeopus*	
Long-billed Curlew	*Numenius americanus*	
Hudsonian Godwit	*Limosa haemastica*	
Marbled Godwit	*Limosa fedoa*	
Ruddy Turnstone	*Arenaria interpres*	
Red Knot	*Calidris canutus*	
Surfbird	*Calidris virgata*	
Ruff	*Calidris pugnax*	
Stilt Sandpiper	*Calidris himantopus*	
Curlew Sandpiper	*Calidris ferruginea*	
Sanderling	*Calidris alba*	
Dunlin	*Calidris alpina*	
Baird's Sandpiper	*Calidris bairdii*	
Least Sandpiper	*Calidris minutilla*	
White-rumped Sandpiper	*Calidris fuscicollis*	
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	*Calidris subruficollis*	
Pectoral Sandpiper	*Calidris melanotos*	
Semipalmated Sandpiper	*Calidris pusilla*	
Western Sandpiper	*Calidris mauri*	
Short-billed Dowitcher	*Limnodromus griseus*	
Long-billed Dowitcher	*Limnodromus scolopaceus*	
Wilson's Snipe	*Gallinago delicata*	
Wilson's Phalarope	*Phalaropus tricolor*	
Red-necked Phalarope	*Phalaropus lobatus*	
Red Phalarope	*Phalaropus fulicarius*	

Skuas, Jaegers (4)	Stercorariidae	
South Polar Skua	*Stercorarius maccormicki*	
Pomarine Jaeger	*Stercorarius pomarinus*	
Parasitic Jaeger	*Stercorarius parasiticus*	
Long-tailed Jaeger	*Stercorarius longicaudus*	

Gulls, Terns, Skimmers (28)	Laridae	
Swallow-tailed Gull	*Creagrus furcatus*	
Black-legged Kittiwake	*Rissa tridactyla*	
Sabine's Gull	*Xema sabini*	
Bonaparte's Gull	*Chroicocephalus philadelphia*	
Gray-hooded Gull	*Chroicocephalus cirrocephalus*	
Gray Gull	*Leucophaeus modestus*	
Laughing Gull	*Leucophaeus atricilla*	
Franklin's Gull	*Leucophaeus pipixcan*	
Ring-billed Gull	*Larus delawarensis*	
California Gull	*Larus californicus*	
Herring Gull	*Larus argentatus*	
Brown Noddy	*Anous stolidus*	
Black Noddy	*Anous minutus*	
White Tern	*Gygis alba*	
Sooty Tern	*Onychoprion fuscatus*	
Bridled Tern	*Onychoprion anaethetus*	
Least Tern	*Sternula antillarum*	
Large-billed Tern	*Phaetusa simplex*	
Gull-billed Tern	*Gelochelidon nilotica*	
Caspian Tern	*Hydroprogne caspia*	
Black Tern	*Chlidonias niger*	
Common Tern	*Sterna hirundo*	
Arctic Tern	*Sterna paradisaea*	
Forster's Tern	*Sterna forsteri*	
Royal Tern	*Thalasseus maximus*	
Sandwich Tern	*Thalasseus sandvicensis*	
Elegant Tern	*Thalasseus elegans*	
Black Skimmer	*Rynchops niger*	

Pigeons, Doves (25)	Columbidae	
Rock Pigeon	*Columba livia*	
Pale-vented Pigeon	*Patagioenas cayennensis*	
Scaled Pigeon	*Patagioenas speciosa*	
White-crowned Pigeon	*Patagioenas leucocephala*	
Red-billed Pigeon	*Patagioenas flavirostris*	
Band-tailed Pigeon	*Patagioenas fasciata*	
Ruddy Pigeon	*Patagioenas subvinacea*	
Short-billed Pigeon	*Patagioenas nigrirostris*	
White-winged Dove	*Zenaida asiatica*	
Mourning Dove	*Zenaida macroura*	
Inca Dove	*Columbina inca*	
Common Ground-Dove	*Columbina passerina*	
Plain-breasted Ground-Dove	*Columbina minuta*	
Ruddy Ground-Dove	*Columbina talpacoti*	
Blue Ground-Dove	*Claravis pretiosa*	
Maroon-chested Ground-Dove	*Claravis mondetoura*	
White-tipped Dove	*Leptotila verreauxi*	
Gray-headed Dove	*Leptotila plumbeiceps*	
Gray-chested Dove	*Leptotila cassini*	
Olive-backed Quail-Dove	*Geotrygon veraguensis*	
Chiriqui Quail-Dove	*Geotrygon chiriquensis*	
Purplish-backed Quail-Dove	*Geotrygon lawrencii*	
Buff-fronted Quail-Dove	*Geotrygon costaricensis*	
Violaceous Quail-Dove	*Geotrygon violacea*	
Ruddy Quail-Dove	*Geotrygon montana*	

Cuckoos (12)	Cuculidae	
Squirrel Cuckoo	*Piaya cayana*	
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	*Coccyzus americanus*	
Mangrove Cuckoo	*Coccyzus minor*	
Cocos Cuckoo	*Coccyzus ferrugineus*	
Black-billed Cuckoo	*Coccyzus erythropthalmus*	
Striped Cuckoo	*Tapera naevia*	
Pheasant Cuckoo	*Dromococcyx phasianellus*	
Lesser Ground-Cuckoo	*Morococcyx erythropygus*	
Rufous-vented Ground-Cuckoo	*Neomorphus geoffroyi*	
Greater Ani	*Crotophaga major*	
Smooth-billed Ani	*Crotophaga ani*	
Groove-billed Ani	*Crotophaga sulcirostris*	

Barn-Owls (1)	Tytonidae	
Barn Owl	*Tyto alba*	

Owls (16)	**Strigidae**	
Pacific Screech-Owl	*Megascops cooperi*	
Tropical Screech-Owl	*Megascops choliba*	
Vermiculated Screech-Owl	*Megascops guatemalae*	
Bare-shanked Screech-Owl	*Megascops clarkii*	
Crested Owl	*Lophostrix cristata*	
Spectacled Owl	*Pulsatrix perspicillata*	
Great Horned Owl	*Bubo virginianus*	
Costa Rican Pygmy-Owl	*Glaucidium costaricanum*	
Central American Pygmy-Owl	*Glaucidium griseiceps*	
Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl	*Glaucidium brasilianum*	
Burrowing Owl	*Athene cunicularia*	
Mottled Owl	*Ciccaba virgata*	
Black-and-white Owl	*Ciccaba nigrolineata*	
Short-eared Owl	*Asio flammeus*	
Striped Owl	*Pseudoscops clamator*	
Unspotted Saw-whet Owl	*Aegolius ridgwayi*	

Nightjars, Allies (10)	**Caprimulgidae**	
Lesser Nighthawk	*Chordeiles acutipennis*	
Common Nighthawk	*Chordeiles minor*	
Short-tailed Nighthawk	*Lurocalis semitorquatus*	
Common Pauraque	*Nyctidromus albicollis*	
White-tailed Nightjar	*Hydropsalis cayennensis*	
Ocellated Poorwill	*Nyctiphrynus ocellatus*	
Chuck-will's-widow	*Antrostomus carolinensis*	
Rufous Nightjar	*Antrostomus rufus*	
Eastern Whip-poor-will	*Antrostomus vociferus*	
Dusky Nightjar	*Antrostomus saturatus*	

Potoos (3)	**Nyctibiidae**	
Great Potoo	*Nyctibius grandis*	
Common Potoo	*Nyctibius griseus*	
Northern Potoo	*Nyctibius jamaicensis*	

Oilbird (1)	**Steatornithidae**	
Oilbird	*Steatornis caripensis*	

Swifts (11)	**Apodidae**	
Black Swift	*Cypseloides niger*	
White-chinned Swift	*Cypseloides cryptus*	
Spot-fronted Swift	*Cypseloides cherriei*	
Chestnut-collared Swift	*Streptoprocne rutila*	
White-collared Swift	*Streptoprocne zonaris*	
Chimney Swift	*Chaetura pelagica*	
Vaux's Swift	*Chaetura vauxi*	
Costa Rican Swift	*Chaetura fumosa*	
Gray-rumped Swift	*Chaetura cinereiventris*	
Lesser Swallow-tailed Swift	*Panyptila cayennensis*	
Great Swallow-tailed Swift	*Panyptila sanctihieronymi*	

Hummingbirds (52)	**Trochilidae**	
White-necked Jacobin	*Florisuga mellivora*	
White-tipped Sicklebill	*Eutoxeres aquila*	
Bronzy Hermit	*Glaucis aeneus*	
Band-tailed Barbthroat	*Threnetes ruckeri*	
Green Hermit	*Phaethornis guy*	
Long-billed Hermit	*Phaethornis longirostris*	
Stripe-throated Hermit	*Phaethornis striigularis*	
Green-fronted Lancebill	*Doryfera ludovicae*	
Brown Violetear	*Colibri delphinae*	
Green Violetear	*Colibri thalassinus*	
Purple-crowned Fairy	*Heliothryx barroti*	
Green-breasted Mango	*Anthracothorax prevostii*	
Veraguan Mango	*Anthracothorax veraguensis*	
Green Thorntail	*Discosura conversii*	
Rufous-crested Coquette	*Lophornis delattrei*	
Black-crested Coquette	*Lophornis helenae*	
White-crested Coquette	*Lophornis adorabilis*	
Green-crowned Brilliant	*Heliodoxa jacula*	
Magnificent Hummingbird	*Eugenes fulgens*	
Long-billed Starthroat	*Heliomaster longirostris*	
Plain-capped Starthroat	*Heliomaster constantii*	
Fiery-throated Hummingbird	*Panterpe insignis*	
White-bellied Mountain-gem	*Lampornis hemileucus*	
Purple-throated Mountain-gem	*Lampornis calolaemus*	
White-throated Mountain-gem	*Lampornis castaneoventris*	
Magenta-throated Woodstar	*Calliphlox bryantae*	
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	*Archilochus colubris*	

Volcano Hummingbird	*Selasphorus flammula*	
Scintillant Hummingbird	*Selasphorus scintilla*	
Canivet's Emerald	*Chlorostilbon canivetii*	
Garden Emerald	*Chlorostilbon assimilis*	
Violet-headed Hummingbird	*Klais guimeti*	
Scaly-breasted Hummingbird	*Phaeochroa cuvierii*	
Violet Sabrewing	*Campylopterus hemileucurus*	
Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer	*Chalybura urochrysia*	
Crowned Woodnymph	*Thalurania colombica*	
Stripe-tailed Hummingbird	*Eupherusa eximia*	
Black-bellied Hummingbird	*Eupherusa nigriventris*	
White-tailed Emerald	*Elvira chionura*	
Coppery-headed Emerald	*Elvira cupreiceps*	
Snowcap	*Microchera albocoronata*	
White-bellied Emerald	*Amazilia candida*	
Blue-chested Hummingbird	*Amazilia amabilis*	
Charming Hummingbird	*Amazilia decora*	
Mangrove Hummingbird	*Amazilia boucardi*	
Blue-tailed Hummingbird	*Amazilia cyanura*	
Steely-vented Hummingbird	*Amazilia saucerrottei*	
Snowy-bellied Hummingbird	*Amazilia edward*	
Rufous-tailed Hummingbird	*Amazilia tzacatl*	
Cinnamon Hummingbird	*Amazilia rutila*	
Sapphire-throated Hummingbird	*Lepidopyga coeruleogularis*	
Blue-throated Goldentail	*Hylocharis eliciae*	

Trogons (10)	**Trogonidae**	
Resplendent Quetzal	*Pharomachrus mocinno*	
Lattice-tailed Trogon	*Trogon clathratus*	
Slaty-tailed Trogon	*Trogon massena*	
Black-headed Trogon	*Trogon melanocephalus*	
Baird's Trogon	*Trogon bairdii*	
Gartered Trogon	*Trogon caligatus*	
Black-throated Trogon	*Trogon rufus*	
Elegant Trogon	*Trogon elegans*	
Orange-bellied Trogon	*Trogon aurantiiventris*	
Collared Trogon	*Trogon collaris*	

Motmots (6)	**Momotidae**	
Tody Motmot	*Hylomanes momotula*	
Blue-crowned Motmot	*Momotus coeruliceps*	
Rufous Motmot	*Baryphthengus martii*	
Keel-billed Motmot	*Electron carinatum*	
Broad-billed Motmot	*Electron platyrhynchum*	
Turquoise-browed Motmot	*Eumomota superciliosa*	

Kingfishers (6)	**Alcedinidae**	
Ringed Kingfisher	*Megaceryle torquata*	
Belted Kingfisher	*Megaceryle alcyon*	
Amazon Kingfisher	*Chloroceryle amazona*	
Green Kingfisher	*Chloroceryle americana*	
Green-and-rufous Kingfisher	*Chloroceryle inda*	
American Pygmy Kingfisher	*Chloroceryle aenea*	

Puffbirds (5)	**Bucconidae**	
White-necked Puffbird	*Notharchus hyperrhynchus*	
Pied Puffbird	*Notharchus tectus*	
White-whiskered Puffbird	*Malacoptila panamensis*	
Lanceolated Monklet	*Micromonacha lanceolata*	
White-fronted Nunbird	*Monasa morphoeus*	

Jacamars (2)	**Galbulidae**	
Rufous-tailed Jacamar	*Galbula ruficauda*	
Great Jacamar	*Jacamerops aureus*	

New World Barbets (1)	**Capitonidae**	
Red-headed Barbet	*Eubucco bourcierii*	

Toucan-Barbets (1)	**Semnornithidae**	
Prong-billed Barbet	*Semnornis frantzii*	

Toucans (6)	**Ramphastidae**	
Emerald Toucanet	*Aulacorhynchus prasinus*	
Collared Aracari	*Pteroglossus torquatus*	
Fiery-billed Aracari	*Pteroglossus frantzii*	
Yellow-eared Toucanet	*Selenidera spectabilis*	
Black-mandibled Toucan	*Ramphastos ambiguus*	
Keel-billed Toucan	*Ramphastos sulfuratus*	

Woodpeckers (16)	Picidae	
Olivaceous Piculet	*Picumnus olivaceus*	
Acorn Woodpecker	*Melanerpes formicivorus*	
Golden-naped Woodpecker	*Melanerpes chrysauchen*	
Black-cheeked Woodpecker	*Melanerpes pucherani*	
Red-crowned Woodpecker	*Melanerpes rubricapillus*	
Hoffmann's Woodpecker	*Melanerpes hoffmannii*	
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	*Sphyrapicus varius*	
Smoky-brown Woodpecker	*Picoides fumigatus*	
Hairy Woodpecker	*Picoides villosus*	
Red-rumped Woodpecker	*Veniliornis kirkii*	
Rufous-winged Woodpecker	*Piculus simplex*	
Golden-olive Woodpecker	*Colaptes rubiginosus*	
Cinnamon Woodpecker	*Celeus loricatus*	
Chestnut-colored Woodpecker	*Celeus castaneus*	
Lineated Woodpecker	*Dryocopus lineatus*	
Pale-billed Woodpecker	*Campephilus guatemalensis*	

Falcons, Caracaras (13)	Falconidae	
Barred Forest-Falcon	*Micrastur ruficollis*	
Slaty-backed Forest-Falcon	*Micrastur mirandollei*	
Collared Forest-Falcon	*Micrastur semitorquatus*	
Red-throated Caracara	*Ibycter americanus*	
Crested Caracara	*Caracara cheriway*	
Yellow-headed Caracara	*Milvago chimachima*	
Laughing Falcon	*Herpetotheres cachinnans*	
American Kestrel	*Falco sparverius*	
Merlin	*Falco columbarius*	
Aplomado Falcon	*Falco femoralis*	
Bat Falcon	*Falco rufigularis*	
Orange-breasted Falcon	*Falco deiroleucus*	
Peregrine Falcon	*Falco peregrinus*	

Parrots (17)	Psittacidae	
Sulphur-winged Parakeet	*Pyrrhura hoffmanni*	
Crimson-fronted Parakeet	*Aratinga finschi*	
Olive-throated Parakeet	*Aratinga nana*	
Orange-fronted Parakeet	*Aratinga canicularis*	
Brown-throated Parakeet	*Aratinga pertinax*	
Great Green Macaw	*Ara ambiguus*	
Scarlet Macaw	*Ara macao*	
Barred Parakeet	*Bolborhynchus lineola*	
Orange-chinned Parakeet	*Brotogeris jugularis*	
Red-fronted Parrotlet	*Touit costaricensis*	
Brown-hooded Parrot	*Pyrilia haematotis*	
Blue-headed Parrot	*Pionus menstruus*	
White-crowned Parrot	*Pionus senilis*	
Red-lored Parrot	*Amazona autumnalis*	
Yellow-naped Parrot	*Amazona auropalliata*	
White-fronted Parrot	*Amazona albifrons*	
Mealy Parrot	*Amazona farinosa*	

Typical Antbirds (22)	Thamnophilidae	
Rufous-rumped Antwren	*Euchrepomis callinota*	
Fasciated Antshrike	*Cymbilaimus lineatus*	
Great Antshrike	*Taraba major*	
Barred Antshrike	*Thamnophilus doliatus*	
Black-crowned Antshrike	*Thamnophilus atrinucha*	
Black-hooded Antshrike	*Thamnophilus bridgesi*	
Russet Antshrike	*Thamnistes anabatinus*	
Plain Antvireo	*Dysithamnus mentalis*	
Streak-crowned Antvireo	*Dysithamnus striaticeps*	
Spot-crowned Antvireo	*Dysithamnus puncticeps*	
Checker-throated Antwren	*Epinecrophylla fulviventris*	
White-flanked Antwren	*Myrmotherula axillaris*	
Slaty Antwren	*Myrmotherula schisticolor*	
Dot-winged Antwren	*Microrhopias quixensis*	
Dusky Antbird	*Cercomacra tyrannina*	
Bare-crowned Antbird	*Gymnocichla nudiceps*	
Chestnut-backed Antbird	*Myrmeciza exsul*	
Dull-mantled Antbird	*Myrmeciza laemosticta*	
Zeledon's Antbird	*Myrmeciza zeledoni*	
Bicolored Antbird	*Gymnopithys leucaspis*	
Spotted Antbird	*Hylophylax naevioides*	
Ocellated Antbird	*Phaenostictus mcleannani*	

Gnateaters (1)	Conopophagidae	
Black-crowned Antpitta	*Pittasoma michleri*	

Antpittas (4)	**Grallariidae**	
Scaled Antpitta	*Grallaria guatimalensis*	
Streak-chested Antpitta	*Hylopezus perspicillatus*	
Thicket Antpitta	*Hylopezus dives*	
Ochre-breasted Antpitta	*Grallaricula flavirostris*	

Tapaculos (1)	**Rhinocryptidae**	
Silvery-fronted Tapaculo	*Scytalopus argentifrons*	

Antthrushes (3)	**Formicariidae**	
Black-faced Antthrush	*Formicarius analis*	
Black-headed Antthrush	*Formicarius nigricapillus*	
Rufous-breasted Antthrush	*Formicarius rufipectus*	

Ovenbirds, Woodcreepers (34)	**Furnariidae**	
Tawny-throated Leaftosser	*Sclerurus mexicanus*	
Scaly-throated Leaftosser	*Sclerurus guatemalensis*	
Gray-throated Leaftosser	*Sclerurus albigularis*	
Olivaceous Woodcreeper	*Sittasomus griseicapillus*	
Long-tailed Woodcreeper	*Deconychura longicauda*	
Plain-brown Woodcreeper	*Dendrocincla fuliginosa*	
Tawny-winged Woodcreeper	*Dendrocincla anabatina*	
Ruddy Woodcreeper	*Dendrocincla homochroa*	
Wedge-billed Woodcreeper	*Glyphorynchus spirurus*	
Northern Barred-Woodcreeper	*Dendrocolaptes sanctithomae*	
Black-banded Woodcreeper	*Dendrocolaptes picumnus*	
Strong-billed Woodcreeper	*Xiphocolaptes promeropirhynchus*	
Cocoa Woodcreeper	*Xiphorhynchus susurrans*	
Ivory-billed Woodcreeper	*Xiphorhynchus flavigaster*	
Black-striped Woodcreeper	*Xiphorhynchus lachrymosus*	
Spotted Woodcreeper	*Xiphorhynchus erythropygius*	
Brown-billed Scythebill	*Campylorhamphus pusillus*	
Streak-headed Woodcreeper	*Lepidocolaptes souleyetii*	
Spot-crowned Woodcreeper	*Lepidocolaptes affinis*	
Plain Xenops	*Xenops minutus*	
Streaked Xenops	*Xenops rutilans*	
Buffy Tuftedcheek	*Pseudocolaptes lawrencii*	

Buff-fronted Foliage-gleaner	*Philydor rufum*	
Scaly-throated Foliage-gleaner	*Anabacerthia variegaticeps*	
Lineated Foliage-gleaner	*Syndactyla subalaris*	
Striped Woodhaunter	*Hyloctistes subulatus*	
Buff-throated Foliage-gleaner	*Automolus ochrolaemus*	
Ruddy Foliage-gleaner	*Automolus rubiginosus*	
Streak-breasted Treehunter	*Thripadectes rufobrunneus*	
Spotted Barbtail	*Premnoplex brunnescens*	
Ruddy Treerunner	*Margarornis rubiginosus*	
Red-faced Spinetail	*Cranioleuca erythrops*	
Pale-breasted Spinetail	*Synallaxis albescens*	
Slaty Spinetail	*Synallaxis brachyura*	

Tyrant Flycatchers (82)	**Tyrannidae**	
Yellow-bellied Tyrannulet	*Ornithion semiflavum*	
Brown-capped Tyrannulet	*Ornithion brunneicapillus*	
Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet	*Camptostoma imberbe*	
Southern Beardless-Tyrannulet	*Camptostoma obsoletum*	
Mouse-colored Tyrannulet	*Phaeomyias murina*	
Cocos Flycatcher	*Nesotriccus ridgwayi*	
Yellow Tyrannulet	*Capsiempis flaveola*	
Yellow-crowned Tyrannulet	*Tyrannulus elatus*	
Greenish Elaenia	*Myiopagis viridicata*	
Yellow-bellied Elaenia	*Elaenia flavogaster*	
Lesser Elaenia	*Elaenia chiriquensis*	
Mountain Elaenia	*Elaenia frantzii*	
Torrent Tyrannulet	*Serpophaga cinerea*	
Olive-striped Flycatcher	*Mionectes olivaceus*	
Ochre-bellied Flycatcher	*Mionectes oleagineus*	
Sepia-capped Flycatcher	*Leptopogon amaurocephalus*	
Slaty-capped Flycatcher	*Leptopogon superciliaris*	
Rufous-browed Tyrannulet	*Phylloscartes superciliaris*	
Rough-legged Tyrannulet	*Phyllomyias burmeisteri*	
Paltry Tyrannulet	*Zimmerius vilissimus*	
Northern Scrub-Flycatcher	*Sublegatus arenarum*	
Black-capped Pygmy-Tyrant	*Myiornis atricapillus*	
Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant	*Lophotriccus pileatus*	

Northern Bentbill	*Oncostoma cinereigulare*	
Slate-headed Tody-Flycatcher	*Poecilotriccus sylvia*	
Common Tody-Flycatcher	*Todirostrum cinereum*	
Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher	*Todirostrum nigriceps*	
Eye-ringed Flatbill	*Rhynchocyclus brevirostris*	
Yellow-olive Flycatcher	*Tolmomyias sulphurescens*	
Yellow-margined Flycatcher	*Tolmomyias assimilis*	
Stub-tailed Spadebill	*Platyrinchus cancrominus*	
White-throated Spadebill	*Platyrinchus mystaceus*	
Golden-crowned Spadebill	*Platyrinchus coronatus*	
Royal Flycatcher	*Onychorhynchus coronatus*	
Ruddy-tailed Flycatcher	*Terenotriccus erythrurus*	
Sulphur-rumped Flycatcher	*Myiobius sulphureipygius*	
Black-tailed Flycatcher	*Myiobius atricaudus*	
Bran-colored Flycatcher	*Myiophobus fasciatus*	
Tawny-chested Flycatcher	*Aphanotriccus capitalis*	
Tufted Flycatcher	*Mitrephanes phaeocercus*	
Olive-sided Flycatcher	*Contopus cooperi*	
Dark Pewee	*Contopus lugubris*	
Ochraceous Pewee	*Contopus ochraceus*	
Western Wood-Pewee	*Contopus sordidulus*	
Eastern Wood-Pewee	*Contopus virens*	
Tropical Pewee	*Contopus cinereus*	
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	*Empidonax flaviventris*	
Acadian Flycatcher	*Empidonax virescens*	
Alder Flycatcher	*Empidonax alnorum*	
Willow Flycatcher	*Empidonax traillii*	
White-throated Flycatcher	*Empidonax albigularis*	
Least Flycatcher	*Empidonax minimus*	
Yellowish Flycatcher	*Empidonax flavescens*	
Black-capped Flycatcher	*Empidonax atriceps*	
Black Phoebe	*Sayornis nigricans*	
Eastern Phoebe	*Sayornis phoebe*	
Vermilion Flycatcher	*Pyrocephalus rubinus*	
Long-tailed Tyrant	*Colonia colonus*	
Bright-rumped Attila	*Attila spadiceus*	
Rufous Mourner	*Rhytipterna holerythra*	
Dusky-capped Flycatcher	*Myiarchus tuberculifer*	

Panama Flycatcher	*Myiarchus panamensis*	
Ash-throated Flycatcher	*Myiarchus cinerascens*	
Nutting's Flycatcher	*Myiarchus nuttingi*	
Great Crested Flycatcher	*Myiarchus crinitus*	
Brown-crested Flycatcher	*Myiarchus tyrannulus*	
Great Kiskadee	*Pitangus sulphuratus*	
Boat-billed Flycatcher	*Megarynchus pitangua*	
Rusty-margined Flycatcher	*Myiozetetes cayanensis*	
Social Flycatcher	*Myiozetetes similis*	
Gray-capped Flycatcher	*Myiozetetes granadensis*	
White-ringed Flycatcher	*Conopias albovittatus*	
Golden-bellied Flycatcher	*Myiodynastes hemichrysus*	
Streaked Flycatcher	*Myiodynastes maculatus*	
Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher	*Myiodynastes luteiventris*	
Piratic Flycatcher	*Legatus leucophaius*	
Tropical Kingbird	*Tyrannus melancholicus*	
Western Kingbird	*Tyrannus verticalis*	
Eastern Kingbird	*Tyrannus tyrannus*	
Gray Kingbird	*Tyrannus dominicensis*	
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	*Tyrannus forficatus*	
Fork-tailed Flycatcher	*Tyrannus savana*	

Sharpbill (1)	**Oxyruncidae**	
Sharpbill	*Oxyruncus cristatus*	

Cotingas (8)	**Cotingidae**	
Purple-throated Fruitcrow	*Querula purpurata*	
Bare-necked Umbrellabird	*Cephalopterus glabricollis*	
Lovely Cotinga	*Cotinga amabilis*	
Turquoise Cotinga	*Cotinga ridgwayi*	
Rufous Piha	*Lipaugus unirufus*	
Three-wattled Bellbird	*Procnias tricarunculatus*	
Yellow-billed Cotinga	*Carpodectes antoniae*	
Snowy Cotinga	*Carpodectes nitidus*	

Manakins (9)	**Pipridae**	
White-ruffed Manakin	*Corapipo altera*	
Lance-tailed Manakin	*Chiroxiphia lanceolata*	

Long-tailed Manakin	*Chiroxiphia linearis*	
White-crowned Manakin	*Dixiphia pipra*	
Red-capped Manakin	*Ceratopipra mentalis*	
White-collared Manakin	*Manacus candei*	
Orange-collared Manakin	*Manacus aurantiacus*	
Blue-crowned Manakin	*Lepidothrix coronata*	
Gray-headed Piprites	*Piprites griseiceps*	

Tityras, Becards, Allies (9)	**Tityridae**	
Black-crowned Tityra	*Tityra inquisitor*	
Masked Tityra	*Tityra semifasciata*	
Northern Schiffornis	*Schiffornis veraepacis*	
Speckled Mourner	*Laniocera rufescens*	
Barred Becard	*Pachyramphus versicolor*	
Cinnamon Becard	*Pachyramphus cinnamomeus*	
White-winged Becard	*Pachyramphus polychopterus*	
Black-and-white Becard	*Pachyramphus albogriseus*	
Rose-throated Becard	*Pachyramphus aglaiae*	

Vireos (16)	**Vireonidae**	
White-eyed Vireo	*Vireo griseus*	
Mangrove Vireo	*Vireo pallens*	
Yellow-throated Vireo	*Vireo flavifrons*	
Blue-headed Vireo	*Vireo solitarius*	
Yellow-winged Vireo	*Vireo carmioli*	
Warbling Vireo	*Vireo gilvus*	
Brown-capped Vireo	*Vireo leucophrys*	
Philadelphia Vireo	*Vireo philadelphicus*	
Red-eyed Vireo	*Vireo olivaceus*	
Yellow-green Vireo	*Vireo flavoviridis*	
Black-whiskered Vireo	*Vireo altiloquus*	
Scrub Greenlet	*Hylophilus flavipes*	
Tawny-crowned Greenlet	*Hylophilus ochraceiceps*	
Lesser Greenlet	*Hylophilus decurtatus*	
Green Shrike-Vireo	*Vireolanius pulchellus*	
Rufous-browed Peppershrike	*Cyclarhis gujanensis*	

Jays (5)	**Corvidae**	
Silvery-throated Jay	*Cyanolyca argentigula*	
Azure-hooded Jay	*Cyanolyca cucullata*	

White-throated Magpie-Jay	*Calocitta formosa*	
Brown Jay	*Psilorhinus morio*	
Black-chested Jay	*Cyanocorax affinis*	

Swallows (13)	**Hirundinidae**	
Blue-and-white Swallow	*Pygochelidon cyanoleuca*	
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*	
Southern Rough-winged Swallow	*Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*	
Purple Martin	*Progne subis*	
Gray-breasted Martin	*Progne chalybea*	
Brown-chested Martin	*Progne tapera*	
Tree Swallow	*Tachycineta bicolor*	
Mangrove Swallow	*Tachycineta albilinea*	
Violet-green Swallow	*Tachycineta thalassina*	
Bank Swallow	*Riparia riparia*	
Barn Swallow	*Hirundo rustica*	
Cliff Swallow	*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*	
Cave Swallow	*Petrochelidon fulva*	

Wrens (22)	**Troglodytidae**	
Rock Wren	*Salpinctes obsoletus*	
Nightingale Wren	*Microcerculus philomela*	
Scaly-breasted Wren	*Microcerculus marginatus*	
House Wren	*Troglodytes aedon*	
Ochraceous Wren	*Troglodytes ochraceus*	
Timberline Wren	*Thryorchilus browni*	
Sedge Wren	*Cistothorus platensis*	
Band-backed Wren	*Campylorhynchus zonatus*	
Rufous-naped Wren	*Campylorhynchus rufinucha*	
Black-bellied Wren	*Pheugopedius fasciatoventris*	
Rufous-breasted Wren	*Pheugopedius rutilus*	
Spot-breasted Wren	*Pheugopedius maculipectus*	
Black-throated Wren	*Pheugopedius atrogularis*	
Banded Wren	*Thryophilus pleurostictus*	
Rufous-and-white Wren	*Thryophilus rufalbus*	
Stripe-breasted Wren	*Cantorchilus thoracicus*	
Plain Wren	*Cantorchilus modestus*	
Riverside Wren	*Cantorchilus semibadius*	

Bay Wren	*Cantorchilus nigricapillus*	
White-breasted Wood-Wren	*Henicorhina leucosticta*	
Gray-breasted Wood-Wren	*Henicorhina leucophrys*	
Song Wren	*Cyphorhinus phaeocephalus*	

Gnatwrens, Gnatcatchers (4)	**Polioptilidae**	
Tawny-faced Gnatwren	*Microbates cinereiventris*	
Long-billed Gnatwren	*Ramphocaenus melanurus*	
White-lored Gnatcatcher	*Polioptila albiloris*	
Tropical Gnatcatcher	*Polioptila plumbea*	

Dippers (1)	**Cinclidae**	
American Dipper	*Cinclus mexicanus*	

Thrushes, Allies (15)	**Turdidae**	
Black-faced Solitaire	*Myadestes melanops*	
Black-billed Nightingale-Thrush	*Catharus gracilirostris*	
Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush	*Catharus aurantiirostris*	
Slaty-backed Nightingale-Thrush	*Catharus fuscater*	
Ruddy-capped Nightingale-Thrush	*Catharus frantzii*	
Black-headed Nightingale-Thrush	*Catharus mexicanus*	
Veery	*Catharus fuscescens*	
Gray-cheeked Thrush	*Catharus minimus*	
Swainson's Thrush	*Catharus ustulatus*	
Wood Thrush	*Hylocichla mustelina*	
Sooty Thrush	*Turdus nigrescens*	
Mountain Thrush	*Turdus plebejus*	
Pale-vented Thrush	*Turdus obsoletus*	
Clay-colored Thrush	*Turdus grayi*	
White-throated Thrush	*Turdus assimilis*	

Mockingbirds (2)	**Mimidae**	
Gray Catbird	*Dumetella carolinensis*	
Tropical Mockingbird	*Mimus gilvus*	

Pipits (1)	**Motacillidae**	
American Pipit	*Anthus rubescens*	

Waxwings (1)	**Bombycillidae**	
Cedar Waxwing	*Bombycilla cedrorum*	

Silky-flycatchers (2)	**Ptilogonatidae**	
Black-and-yellow Silky-flycatcher	*Phainoptila melanoxantha*	
Long-tailed Silky-flycatcher	*Ptilogonys caudatus*	

New World Warblers (53)	**Parulidae**	
Ovenbird	*Seiurus aurocapilla*	
Worm-eating Warbler	*Helmitheros vermivorum*	
Louisiana Waterthrush	*Parkesia motacilla*	
Northern Waterthrush	*Parkesia noveboracensis*	
Blue-winged Warbler	*Vermivora cyanoptera*	
Golden-winged Warbler	*Vermivora chrysoptera*	
Black-and-white Warbler	*Mniotilta varia*	
Prothonotary Warbler	*Protonotaria citrea*	
Flame-throated Warbler	*Oreothlypis gutturalis*	
Tennessee Warbler	*Oreothlypis peregrina*	
Orange-crowned Warbler	*Oreothlypis celata*	
Nashville Warbler	*Oreothlypis ruficapilla*	
Connecticut Warbler	*Oporornis agilis*	
Gray-crowned Yellowthroat	*Geothlypis poliocephala*	
Masked Yellowthroat	*Geothlypis aequinoctialis*	
MacGillivray's Warbler	*Geothlypis tolmiei*	
Mourning Warbler	*Geothlypis philadelphia*	
Kentucky Warbler	*Geothlypis formosa*	
Olive-crowned Yellowthroat	*Geothlypis semiflava*	
Common Yellowthroat	*Geothlypis trichas*	
Hooded Warbler	*Setophaga citrina*	
American Redstart	*Setophaga ruticilla*	
Cape May Warbler	*Setophaga tigrina*	
Cerulean Warbler	*Setophaga cerulea*	
Northern Parula	*Setophaga americana*	
Tropical Parula	*Setophaga pitiayumi*	
Magnolia Warbler	*Setophaga magnolia*	
Bay-breasted Warbler	*Setophaga castanea*	
Blackburnian Warbler	*Setophaga fusca*	
Yellow Warbler	*Setophaga petechia*	
Chestnut-sided Warbler	*Setophaga pensylvanica*	
Blackpoll Warbler	*Setophaga striata*	

Black-throated Blue Warbler	*Setophaga caerulescens*	
Palm Warbler	*Setophaga palmarum*	
Pine Warbler	*Setophaga pinus*	
Yellow-rumped Warbler	*Setophaga coronata*	
Yellow-throated Warbler	*Setophaga dominica*	
Prairie Warbler	*Setophaga discolor*	
Townsend's Warbler	*Setophaga townsendi*	
Hermit Warbler	*Setophaga occidentalis*	
Golden-cheeked Warbler	*Setophaga chrysoparia*	
Black-throated Green Warbler	*Setophaga virens*	
Rufous-capped Warbler	*Basileuterus rufifrons*	
Black-cheeked Warbler	*Basileuterus melanogenys*	
Golden-crowned Warbler	*Basileuterus culicivorus*	
Three-striped Warbler	*Basileuterus tristriatus*	
Buff-rumped Warbler	*Myiothlypis fulvicauda*	
Canada Warbler	*Cardellina canadensis*	
Wilson's Warbler	*Cardellina pusilla*	
Slate-throated Redstart	*Myioborus miniatus*	
Collared Redstart	*Myioborus torquatus*	
Wrenthrush	*Zeledonia coronata*	
Yellow-breasted Chat	*Icteria virens*	

Tanagers, Seedeaters, Allies (51)	**Thraupidae**	
Gray-headed Tanager	*Eucometis penicillata*	
White-shouldered Tanager	*Tachyphonus luctuosus*	
Tawny-crested Tanager	*Tachyphonus delatrii*	
White-lined Tanager	*Tachyphonus rufus*	
White-throated Shrike-Tanager	*Lanio leucothorax*	
Crimson-collared Tanager	*Ramphocelus sanguinolentus*	
Passerini's Tanager	*Ramphocelus passerinii*	
Cherrie's Tanager	*Ramphocelus costaricensis*	
Blue-and-gold Tanager	*Bangsia arcaei*	
Blue-gray Tanager	*Thraupis episcopus*	
Yellow-winged Tanager	*Thraupis abbas*	
Palm Tanager	*Thraupis palmarum*	
Golden-hooded Tanager	*Tangara larvata*	

Speckled Tanager	*Tangara guttata*	
Spangle-cheeked Tanager	*Tangara dowii*	
Plain-colored Tanager	*Tangara inornata*	
Rufous-winged Tanager	*Tangara lavinia*	
Bay-headed Tanager	*Tangara gyrola*	
Emerald Tanager	*Tangara florida*	
Silver-throated Tanager	*Tangara icterocephala*	
Scarlet-thighed Dacnis	*Dacnis venusta*	
Blue Dacnis	*Dacnis cayana*	
Shining Honeycreeper	*Cyanerpes lucidus*	
Red-legged Honeycreeper	*Cyanerpes cyaneus*	
Green Honeycreeper	*Chlorophanes spiza*	
Sulphur-rumped Tanager	*Heterospingus rubrifrons*	
Black-and-yellow Tanager	*Chrysothlypis chrysomelas*	
Slaty Flowerpiercer	*Diglossa plumbea*	
Slaty Finch	*Haplospiza rustica*	
Peg-billed Finch	*Acanthidops bairdi*	
Grassland Yellow-Finch	*Sicalis luteola*	
Wedge-tailed Grass-Finch	*Emberizoides herbicola*	
Blue-black Grassquit	*Volatinia jacarina*	
Slate-colored Seedeater	*Sporophila schistacea*	
Variable Seedeater	*Sporophila corvina*	
White-collared Seedeater	*Sporophila torqueola*	
Lined Seedeater	*Sporophila lineola*	
Yellow-bellied Seedeater	*Sporophila nigricollis*	
Ruddy-breasted Seedeater	*Sporophila minuta*	
Nicaraguan Seed-Finch	*Oryzoborus nuttingi*	
Thick-billed Seed-Finch	*Oryzoborus funereus*	
Bananaquit	*Coereba flaveola*	
Yellow-faced Grassquit	*Tiaris olivaceus*	
Cocos Finch	*Pinaroloxias inornata*	
Dusky-faced Tanager	*Mitrospingus cassinii*	
Rosy Thrush-Tanager	*Rhodinocichla rosea*	
Streaked Saltator	*Saltator striatipectus*	
Grayish Saltator	*Saltator coerulescens*	
Buff-throated Saltator	*Saltator maximus*	
Black-headed Saltator	*Saltator atriceps*	
Slate-colored Grosbeak	*Saltator grossus*	

Finches, New World Sparrows, Allies (25)	Emberizidae	
Yellow-thighed Finch	*Pselliophorus tibialis*	
Large-footed Finch	*Pezopetes capitalis*	
Sooty-faced Finch	*Arremon crassirostris*	
Chestnut-capped Brush-Finch	*Arremon brunneinucha*	
Orange-billed Sparrow	*Arremon aurantiirostris*	
Costa Rican Brush-Finch	*Arremon costaricensis*	
Olive Sparrow	*Arremonops rufivirgatus*	
Black-striped Sparrow	*Arremonops conirostris*	
White-naped Brush-Finch	*Atlapetes albinucha*	
Rusty Sparrow	*Aimophila rufescens*	
White-eared Ground-Sparrow	*Melozone leucotis*	
Prevost's Ground-Sparrow	*Melozone biarcuata*	
Stripe-headed Sparrow	*Peucaea ruficauda*	
Botteri's Sparrow	*Peucaea botterii*	
Chipping Sparrow	*Spizella passerina*	
Clay-colored Sparrow	*Spizella pallida*	
Lark Sparrow	*Chondestes grammacus*	
Savannah Sparrow	*Passerculus sandwichensis*	
Grasshopper Sparrow	*Ammodramus savannarum*	
Lincoln's Sparrow	*Melospiza lincolnii*	
Rufous-collared Sparrow	*Zonotrichia capensis*	
Volcano Junco	*Junco vulcani*	
Common Chlorospingus	*Chlorospingus flavopectus*	
Sooty-capped Chlorospingus	*Chlorospingus pileatus*	
Ashy-throated Chlorospingus	*Chlorospingus canigularis*	

Grosbeaks, Buntings, Allies (20)	Cardinalidae	
Hepatic Tanager	*Piranga flava*	
Summer Tanager	*Piranga rubra*	
Scarlet Tanager	*Piranga olivacea*	
Western Tanager	*Piranga ludoviciana*	
Flame-colored Tanager	*Piranga bidentata*	
White-winged Tanager	*Piranga leucoptera*	
Red-crowned Ant-Tanager	*Habia rubica*	
Red-throated Ant-Tanager	*Habia fuscicauda*	
Black-cheeked Ant-Tanager	*Habia atrimaxillaris*	
Carmiol's Tanager	*Chlorothraupis carmioli*	
Black-faced Grosbeak	*Caryothraustes poliogaster*	
Black-thighed Grosbeak	*Pheucticus tibialis*	
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	*Pheucticus ludovicianus*	
Black-headed Grosbeak	*Pheucticus melanocephalus*	
Blue Seedeater	*Amaurospiza concolor*	
Blue-black Grosbeak	*Cyanocompsa cyanoides*	
Blue Grosbeak	*Passerina caerulea*	
Indigo Bunting	*Passerina cyanea*	
Painted Bunting	*Passerina ciris*	
Dickcissel	*Spiza americana*	

Blackbirds, Orioles (23)	Icteridae	
Bobolink	*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*	
Red-winged Blackbird	*Agelaius phoeniceus*	
Red-breasted Blackbird	*Sturnella militaris*	
Eastern Meadowlark	*Sturnella magna*	
Yellow-headed Blackbird	*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*	
Melodious Blackbird	*Dives dives*	
Great-tailed Grackle	*Quiscalus mexicanus*	
Nicaraguan Grackle	*Quiscalus nicaraguensis*	
Shiny Cowbird	*Molothrus bonariensis*	
Bronzed Cowbird	*Molothrus aeneus*	
Giant Cowbird	*Molothrus oryzivorus*	
Black-cowled Oriole	*Icterus prosthemelas*	
Orchard Oriole	*Icterus spurius*	
Yellow-tailed Oriole	*Icterus mesomelas*	
Streak-backed Oriole	*Icterus pustulatus*	
Bullock's Oriole	*Icterus bullockii*	
Spot-breasted Oriole	*Icterus pectoralis*	
Baltimore Oriole	*Icterus galbula*	
Yellow-billed Cacique	*Amblycercus holosericeus*	
Scarlet-rumped Cacique	*Cacicus uropygialis*	
Crested Oropendola	*Psarocolius decumanus*	
Chestnut-headed Oropendola	*Psarocolius wagleri*	
Montezuma Oropendola	*Psarocolius montezuma*	

Euphonias (12)	**Fringillidae**	
Scrub Euphonia	*Euphonia affinis*	
Yellow-crowned Euphonia	*Euphonia luteicapilla*	
Thick-billed Euphonia	*Euphonia laniirostris*	
Yellow-throated Euphonia	*Euphonia hirundinacea*	
Elegant Euphonia	*Euphonia elegantissima*	
Spot-crowned Euphonia	*Euphonia imitans*	
Olive-backed Euphonia	*Euphonia gouldi*	
White-vented Euphonia	*Euphonia minuta*	
Tawny-capped Euphonia	*Euphonia anneae*	
Golden-browed Chlorophonia	*Chlorophonia callophrys*	
Lesser Goldfinch	*Spinus psaltria*	
Yellow-bellied Siskin	*Spinus xanthogastra*	

Old World Sparrows (1)	**Passeridae**	
House Sparrow	*Passer domesticus*	

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Tricolored Munia	*Lonchura malacca*	

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About the Author

Richard Garrigues has been birding since the age of sixteen, when a close encounter with a Black-and-white Warbler walking up a tree trunk just a few feet away from him in suburban New Jersey made a lasting impression. Since 1981, he has lived in Costa Rica, where for nearly thirty years he has been leading birding and natural history tours. This field identification guide to the birds of Costa Rica, now in its second edition, is the culmination of a lifetime spent birding and writing about the natural world.

About the Illustrator

Robert Dean has been studying and painting Neotropical birds for more than fifteen years, during which time he has gone on birding tours—both as a guide and participant—throughout the Americas. Born and raised in London, England, he was a successful professional guitarist and recording artist for eighteen years before settling in Costa Rica in the early 1990s, where he revitalized his childhood passions for wildlife and art. In addition to executing art commissions for the Costa Rican national park service, he has produced illustrations for Rainforest Publications pocket guides on the wildlife of Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Panama, Trinidad and Tobago, Peru, and the United States. Dean illustrated *The Birds of Panama: A Field Guide* (Cornell University Press, 2010) and was a contributing artist to *The Wildlife of Costa Rica: A Field Guide* (Cornell University Press, 2010).

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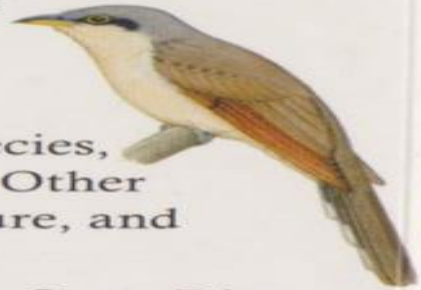

Richard Garrigues is one of the preeminent birding guides in Costa Rica, with more than twenty-five years' experience leading birding and natural history tours. **Robert Dean** is an avid birder and natural history illustrator. Both live in Costa Rica.

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Spine: Male Orange-collared Manakin (*Manacus aurantiacus*).
Back cover: Sunbittern (*Eurypyga helias*) (top); Scaled Antpitta (*Grallaria guatimalensis*) (middle); Cocos Cuckoo (*Coccyzus ferrugineus*) (bottom).